

30 minute Indian Cuisine

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Made in India.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Tina Chaudhuri

Tina Chaudhuri is an Indian woman doctor for whom writing has always been a passion, and she started writing for local magazines and newspapers while studying at medical college in Calcutta.

She became a regular contributor to international travel magazines after she finished her medical education and residency.

She is also the Dermatology Guide for About.com and a columnist for Women's World- Stories, besides having freelanced for several other leading publications.

Her other activities include being a part time volunteer for the Association for India's Development, a non-profit, charitable organization.

Tina's two e-books are:

The 30 minute Indian Cookbook

Indian Impressions (a travel book).

Tina resides in Blacksburg, Virginia with her husband, Abon Mozumdar (Assistant Professor, Department of Finance, Virginia Tech).

Tina often travels around the US speaking to different groups. If you'd like to invite her for a day, send her an e-mail at: Tinachaudhuri@yahoo.com.

Her various topics include:

- Indian cuisine
- How to be a food writer
- Tropical travel

- How to be a freelance travel writer

- Health & Medicine
- How to be a freelance medical writer
- Secrets of successful freelance writers
- How to undertake self-publishing
- Internet publication

30 minute Indian Cuisine

On my second day in the US, I realized that I would have to prepare my favorite cuisine in very different circumstances. As an Indian housewife in America, I was working with a new set of advantages and disadvantages. It was a challenge.

Gradually I learnt that the Western supermarket offers all the necessary products, if you know where to look for them. The solution lies in making the most out of all the products the Western grocery store has to offer, and knowing what to do and what not to do with them to come up with a great meal (in 30 minutes or less)!

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INTRODUCTION

30 minute Indian Cuisine will guide you through the complete process, from selecting the basic ingredients to general methods, to special techniques and serving instructions.

The source of my initial inspiration for food writing was the editor of an electronic magazine for the tropical traveler, who requested an article for her food and gardening section. I sent her a short article on Indian vegetarian fare, and she promptly accepted it.

However, the idea for this book occurred to me when the charitable organization I volunteer for set up a food stall at the Virginia Tech International Street Fair. Almost all the cooking was done voluntarily by three Indian faculty members, in addition to myself. The food was gone before either of us had a chance to sample whatever we were selling!

Next an Indian charity dinner was organized by the volunteers. The dinner tickets were sold out weeks in advance, and we could satisfy only a fraction of the demand, since the volunteers were limited in numbers.

I saw the phenomenal demand for Indian cuisine in a town that had no Indian restaurant. Most Indians, including myself, recalled that their American friends had at some point or the other, hinted how delighted they would be to try out a home-cooked Indian meal.

Unfortunately, time and other constraints prevented us from inviting all our friends over. It was obvious that the interested Americans had no clue about preparing Indian food in their kitchens, and those Indians who did, couldn't spare the time or the effort to oblige all of them.

While I concede that a lot of time and effort is involved in a good many Indian dishes, it is equally true that there are certain recipes that call for a minimum of either. It is exactly these recipes that I have tried to focus on.

Enjoy!

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The Curry & Spice "Culture"

CURRY CULTURE

The Indian curry is amazing in range and versatility, embracing the majority of seasonal vegetables in addition to mutton, chicken, fish, seafood and eggs.

The curries are cooked over an open flame, with liberal doses of spices in vegetable oil.

Traditional accompaniments are rice, either plain boiled or fried; and a variety of flat breads - chapattis, rotis and naans - made fresh from wheat or flour dough, and served hot.

To offset the richness of the traditional curry, a side plate of salad consisting of sliced tomatoes, cucumber, onions and lemons lends a pleasing contrast. Try a bite of fresh tomato after a mouthful of hot curry, and the reason will be obvious.

"Dahi" or yogurt or curds also provide the perfect foil. Along with grated cucumber and onions, chilli powder and cilantro/coriander, the mixture is known as a "raita" and is an indispensable part of the vegetarian meal.

SPICE CULTURE

The golden rule in Indian cuisine is to include a plethora of spices, and maintain the balance between their different flavors.

Spices give Indian cuisine its character. However excessive use can be counter productive, and I have seen both Indians and Westerners forced to be wary of spices and oily fare, with good reasons. The good news is that there are several dishes that use the minimum of either, and the bad news is that they are seldom to be found in any Indian restaurant. I have tried to include as many of these "light" dishes as possible.

Most Indian dishes call for several different spices. Do not assume that they are difficult to obtain and that a visit to the Indian grocery store with a long shopping list is mandatory before the actual task of preparing a meal. Most are to be found in Western supermarkets, and only a couple are confined to the Indian grocery stores.

Check the following list, if you plan an Indian culinary adventure.

The essentials:

Ginger paste or minced ginger

Garlic paste or garlic powder or minced garlic (fresh garlic minced fine is better still)

Tomato paste or puree (raw tomatoes are better still)

Onions chopped or pureed or powdered

Cumin seeds and powder

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Coriander powder

Turmeric powder

Chilli powder

Mustard seeds and powder (to be used only for those dishes that require mustard).

The ginger, garlic, onions and tomatoes are readily found in any Western supermarket, as are the cumin and mustard seeds, mustard and chilli powders. For the turmeric and coriander powders, you will have to visit the Indian store.

Last but not least, look for cilantro/coriander/dhaniya. It is essential, though it is mostly used as a garnish. After trial and error, I've found that whole cilantro, including the leaves and stems, chopped very fine is a powerful flavoring agent if added during the cooking process in addition to being a colorful garnish if added at the end.

Optional:

Cinnamon

Cardamom

Cloves

(None of the above should be difficult to find in any grocery store, Western or Oriental).

Garam masala powder

Traditionally, Indian recipes call for garam masala, a blend of the above three spices in a powdered version that will be sold only in Indian grocery stores. Garam masala is a potent mixture, and I have seen it's overuse ruin an otherwise perfect dish. Use only for a strongly flavored dish, and don't hesitate to substitute with whole cinnamon, cardamom and cloves from the standard supermarket, to be on the safe side.

Regional cuisine's may require a few additional ingredients.

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Vegetarian Wiles

If I were a vegetarian, I'd stick to Indian cuisine. The Indian people thrive on vegetarianism, and have perfected the art. Vegetables, greens and potatoes are often served as the main course. Most of them are seasonal - cauliflower and cabbage are to be relished only in winter, while green okra abounds in the summer months. Try the following recipes, and you'll get hooked.

Vegetables

Cauliflower & Potato curry (Alu Gobi)

Cauliflower holds a special place in the Indian heart, especially since it is a seasonal vegetable to be prized in the all-to-short winter months.

Ingredients:

1 lb. cauliflower florets
2 onions chopped fine
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 large potato, cooked and cubed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and (or skillet) fry the onions, ginger and garlic, chopped cilantro/coriander together with cumin and coriander powders for five minutes. Add potato, cauliflower florets, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Mix well to ensure that the vegetables blend with the spices. Be careful not to over cook the cauliflower. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Cauliflower & Mashed Potato Curry

The cauliflower curry has several variations in the regional cuisine's, but this one's a very simple recipe.

Ingredients:

1 lb. cauliflower florets
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin seeds
1 potato, cooked and mashed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the cumin seeds together with the ginger, for a couple of minutes on low heat. Add potato, cauliflower florets, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes.

Cabbage & Potato Curry

Ingredients:

1 lb. shredded cabbage
2 onions chopped fine
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin seeds
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 large potato, cooked and cubed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and (or skillet) fry the onions, ginger and garlic, together with cumin seeds and coriander powder for five minutes. Add potato, shredded cabbage, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Cabbage & Mashed Potato Curry

Ingredients:

1 lb. cabbage, shredded
1/2 lb. potatoes, boiled and mashed
1 tsp. cumin seeds
1 tsp. ginger
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder

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1 tsp. salt or to taste
2 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a large non-stick frying pan (or skillet), and fry the cumin seeds and ginger paste for half a minute, and add the shredded cabbage. After 15 minutes, add the mashed potatoes with turmeric and chilli powders, salt, and cook for another 15 minutes.

Cabbage, Carrots & Potatoes

Strictly speaking, this is not a curry, but can be served as the main course nevertheless.

Ingredients:

1 lb. cabbage, shredded
1/2 lb. cooked potatoes, peeled and cubed
1/2 lb. carrots, shredded
1 tsp. mustard seeds
1 tsp. ground mustard
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. salt or to taste
2 tbsp. oil
Cilantro/coriander leaves

Method:

Heat oil in a large non-stick frying pan (or skillet), and fry the mustard seeds and ground mustard for half a minute, then add the carrots, cilantro/coriander leaves and the shredded cabbage. After 15 minutes, add the cooked potatoes with lemon juice, chilli powder and salt. Serve.

Mixed Vegetable Curry

Ingredients:

6 small onions, quartered
6 small tomatoes, quartered
6 cauliflower florets
6 baby potatoes
1/2 lb. chickpeas
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tbsp. oil
1 tsp. salt or to taste

Method:

Heat oil in a non stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onions, ginger and garlic, tomatoes and potatoes for five minutes. Next, add the cauliflower florets, chickpeas and salt. Cook till done.

Mushroom Curry

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I've noticed that fresh whole button mushrooms are a better option than the sliced ones sold in the supermarkets.

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. mushrooms
1 small onion, chopped
1 tomato, sliced
1 tsp. ginger paste

1 tsp. garlic paste
1/4 tsp. cumin powder
1/4 tsp. coriander powder
1/4 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 large potato, cooked peeled and cubed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat the oil in a small non-stick frying pan (or skillet), and fry the onion and tomato, ginger and garlic pastes together with cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders five minutes. Add the mushrooms and potatoes, season with salt and cook for another five minutes until done.

Chickpea Curry
(*Chole Masale*)

Curried chickpeas have been going strong for years.

Ingredients:

1 lb. canned chickpeas
1 large potato, cooked and cubed
1 tbsp. oil
1 large onion, pureed
1 large tomato, pureed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1/2 tsp. each cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders.
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onion and tomato, ginger and garlic pastes, cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders together for a couple of minutes. Add the potatoes and chickpeas and 1/2 cup of lukewarm water and cook until done. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Eggplant
(*Baigan Bharta*)

Ingredients:

1 lb. eggplant, cooked in the microwave or the oven, peeled and mashed
1 tbsp. oil
1 large onion, chopped fine
1 large tomato, chopped fine
1 tsp. green chilli, chopped fine
1 tsp. salt or to taste

Cilantro/coriander leaves

Method:

Cook the eggplant in the microwave after piercing with a fork (or roast in the oven) until done. Peel off the skin and mash well. Add the oil, chopped onions and tomatoes, green chilli and cilantro/coriander. Season with salt and serve hot.

Paneer

(Cottage Cheese curry)

Ingredients:

1 lb. cottage cheese

1 tbsp. oil

1 large onion, pureed

1 large tomato, pureed

1 tsp. ginger paste

1 tsp. garlic paste

1/2 tsp. each cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders.

1 tsp. green chilli, chopped fine

1 tsp. salt or to taste

Cilantro/coriander leaves

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onion and tomato, ginger and garlic pastes, cilantro/coriander leaves, cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders together for five minutes. The cottage cheese is added, and the curry allowed to simmer for five minutes, before serving.

High, Medium or Low heat?

Please note that:

Vegetables tend to lose crispness and may burn on high heat.

Cooking on high heat requires constant stirring to prevent the vegetables from sticking to the bottom of the vessel.

To be on the safe side, cook vegetables on medium low heat.

For optimum taste, use low heat, though the process is time consuming.

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The Greens

Chickpea & Spinach Curry

(Chana Saag)

Spinach is a popular ingredient used as a base for the curry.

Ingredients:

1 lb. canned chickpeas

1 large potato, cooked and cubed
1 large onion, pureed
1 large tomato, pureed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1/2 tsp. each cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders.
1 tsp. salt or to taste
1 cup of spinach leaves, pureed

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onion and tomato, ginger and garlic pastes, cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders together for five minutes. Add the spinach paste and the potatoes, and cook for twenty five minutes on medium low heat with a cup of lukewarm water. The chickpeas are added, and the curry allowed to simmer for two minutes, before serving.

Potato & Spinach Curry

(Alu Saag)

Ingredients:

1 lb. chopped spinach
1 lb. potatoes, cooked and cubed
2 tbsp. oil
1 large onion, pureed
1 large tomato, pureed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1/2 tsp. each cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders.
1 tsp. salt or to taste

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onion and tomato, ginger and garlic pastes, cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders together for five minutes. Add the chopped spinach and the potatoes, and cook for twenty five minutes on medium low heat with a cup of lukewarm water. Stir well to let the spinach blend with the spices and cover with a lid during cooking.

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Mustard Greens

(Sarson ka Saag)

Ingredients:

1 tbsp. oil
1 large onion, pureed
1 large tomato, pureed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste

1/2 tsp. each cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders.
1 tsp. salt or to taste
1 lb. chopped mustard greens

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onion and tomato, ginger and garlic pastes, cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders together for five minutes. Add the chopped mustard greens, and cook for twenty five minutes on medium low heat with a cup of lukewarm water.

Okra Curry
(*Masala Bhindi*)

Okra is one of the commoner vegetables used all over India; it has a place in most regional cuisine's.

Ingredients:

1 lb. okra, sliced lengthwise or chopped into small pieces.
2 onions, pureed
2 tsp. ginger paste
2 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 potato, cubed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
1 large tomato, pureed
2 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onions, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powders and tomato for five minutes on medium low heat. Add potato, okra, turmeric and chilli powders and salt and cook on medium low heat for half an hour.

Okra & Mustard:
(*Shorshe Dharosh*)

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Originally a Bengali dish, I have used ingredients easily available in the West. This is one of those recipes that can be ready in a few minutes and still taste great.

Ingredients:

1 lb. whole okra.
1 tbsp. mustard powder, made into a paste with equal amounts of water (this is the recommended amount, but feel free to use more paste if you're fond of mustard).
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder

1 tsp. mustard seeds
1 tsp. salt or to taste
2 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the mustard seeds for half a minute, followed by the mustard paste for a minute on low heat. Add okra, turmeric and chilli powders and salt, and cook on medium low heat for ten to fifteen minutes.

Peas & Potato Curry

Popularly known as "Alu Matar", this one's a vegetarian veteran.

Ingredients:

1 lb. shelled green peas
1 onion, pureed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 large potato, cooked and cubed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onions, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powders for five minutes. Add potato, green peas, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Peppers & Potato Curry

(Shimla mirch ki sabzi)

Ingredients:

1 lb. green bell peppers, sliced fine

1 onion, pureed
1 tomato, pureed
1 tbsp. ginger paste
1 tbsp. garlic paste
2 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder

1 lb. potatoes, cooked and cubed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
2 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onions, tomatoes, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powders for five minutes. Add potatoes, green bell peppers, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water, and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Green Beans & Potato Curry

Ingredients:

1 lb. French style cut green beans
1 onion, pureed
1 tbsp. ginger paste
1 tbsp. garlic paste
2 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 lb. potatoes, cooked and cubed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
2 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onions, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powders for five minutes. Add potatoes, green beans, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

*Cottage Cheese & Peas
(Paneer Matar)*

Ingredients:

1 lb. shelled green peas

1 onion, pureed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tomato, pureed
1 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder

1 tsp. coriander powder
1 lb. cottage cheese
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onions, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powder for five minutes. Add tomato puree, cottage cheese, green peas, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Cottage Cheese & Spinach
(*Palak Paneer*)

Ingredients:

1 lb. chopped spinach
1 onion, pureed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 large tomato, pureed
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 lb. cottage cheese
1 tsp. salt or to taste
2 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the onion, tomato, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powder for five minutes. Add cottage cheese, chopped spinach, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for half an hour.

The Potato

Potato Curry

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(Alu ki Sabzi)

From the desert state of Rajasthan, this one's a delight. The Rajasthani people were often deprived of fresh vegetables and fruits in their hostile arid environment. Most also happened to be die-hard vegetarians. They used non-perishable dried legumes, and root vegetables such as potatoes, onions and garlic capable of prolonged storage. They honed their vegetarian skills into a fine art that has withstood the test of time.

Ingredients:

3 large boiled potatoes, two cubed and the other mashed
1 tsp. cumin
a pinch of asafetida (optional)
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. chili powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. rock salt
1/2 tsp. ground pepper
1 tbsp. oil
3 green chillies
Chopped cilantro/coriander

Method:

Heat oil in a frying pan (or skillet) and fry the cumin, asafetida, ginger and garlic for a minute. Add potatoes, turmeric, chilli powder, salt and pepper and a cup of lukewarm water. Simmer for a couple of minutes, and garnish with green chillies and chopped cilantro/coriander.

Potato Tomato Curry

(Alu Tamatar)

I came across this easy recipe, that utilizes the minimum of spices to yield a delicious curry.

Ingredients:

1/2 lbs. potatoes, peeled, cooked and cubed
1/2 lbs. tomatoes, cubed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 tsp. salt or to taste, rock salt preferable
1 tsp. chilli powder (optional)
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tablespoon oil

Method:

Heat oil in a small non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the ginger paste and coriander powder for half a minute, before adding the potatoes and tomatoes, salt and chilli powder. Cook until done (about 10 minutes), add 1/2 cup warm water and simmer, and garnish with

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cilantro/coriander.

Potatoes & Tomatoes

(Alu Tamatar)

This is a variation of the above combination- if you don't have coriander powder at home, or wish to avoid the same, here's a variation that is lighter in terms of spices.

Ingredients:

1/2 lbs. cooked potato cubes. Use either peeled or un-peeled potatoes according to your preference.

1/2 lbs. tomatoes, diced

1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds

1/4 teaspoon turmeric powder

1 tsp. salt or to taste, rock salt preferable

1 tsp. chilli powder (optional)

Cilantro/coriander leaves

1 tablespoon oil

Method:

Heat oil in a small non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the cumin seeds for half a minute, before adding the potatoes and tomatoes, salt and turmeric and chilli powder. Cook until done (about 10 minutes), add 1/2 cup warm water and simmer, and garnish with cilantro/coriander.

Note: The above combination of potatoes and spices can be used to stuff pitas/pocket breads/parathas.

I cook the potatoes in the microwave and finely slice them with a knife before cooking, so that I get a delicious mixture of mashed potatoes, tomatoes and spices at the end. After putting the mixture into wheat pocket bread originally meant for stuffed pitas, the result is a close approximation of the traditional "alu-paratha".

Each stuffed pita can be warmed in the microwave for half a minute, and topped with a teaspoon of butter so that you have a sumptuous meal ready in minutes!

To make optimum use of your time, put the potatoes to cook in the microwave (a total of four minutes, two minutes on each side after washing and pricking with a fork) or boil them (cut into cubes and add to boiling water until done), according to your preference. In the meantime, chop the tomatoes and the cilantro/coriander. As soon as the potatoes are ready, you can start cooking, and the whole process shouldn't last for more than half an hour.

Fried Potatoes

(Alu Bhaji)

Ingredients:

1 lb. shoestring potatoes/shredded potatoes

Oil for deep frying

1/2 tsp. turmeric powder

Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

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Heat oil in a frying pan and add the potatoes. Sprinkle turmeric powders, salt and pepper and allow to sizzle until crisp. Serve immediately.

A Variation:

To avoid deep frying, there is an alternative method.

Ingredients:

1 lb. pre-cooked cubed potatoes
1 tbsp. oil
1/2 tsp. turmeric powder
Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Heat oil in a frying pan and add the potatoes. Sprinkle turmeric powders, salt and pepper and allow to sizzle until crisp. Serve immediately.

Potato Cutlet

(Alu Tikka)

Ingredients:

2 cups mashed potatoes
1 small onion, chopped
Chopped cilantro/coriander
2 tbsp. butter
Salt and Pepper

Method:

Mix the mashed potatoes with half the butter, onion, salt, pepper and cilantro/coriander. Shape into round flat cutlets and fry on medium low heat in the remaining butter, five minutes on either side. Serve hot immediately with tomato sauce, optionally between toasted hamburger buns.

Mashed Potatoes

(Alu Bhate)

The pungent flavor of mustard oil makes all the difference:

Ingredients:

2 cups mashed potatoes
1 small onion, chopped
1 tbsp. mustard oil
Salt
1 roasted red chilli, powdered

Method:

Mix the mashed potatoes with mustard oil, onions, salt, and red chilli. Serve hot immediately.

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Lentils (Dhals)

Lentils are consumed by the poor and rich alike in India. They are part of the staple diet, consumed both by the rice eating East and South, as well as the wheat eating North Indians. This is one item that is to be found in Indian grocery stores alone - I am yet to find it in any Western supermarket.

It is necessary to pre-cook the lentils-while the pressure cooker is much faster and will finish the task in a matter of minutes, the lentils can be boiled in any heavy bottomed vessel. Since the latter method will take much longer, in such a situation I cook on low heat for a couple of hours - to avoid having to keep an eye on the vessel lest the contents boil over. The end point is reached when the lentils attain a soupy consistency.

As the preparation time is longer and requires considerable effort, it is a good idea to pre-cook about half a pound or one pound (depending on consumption) and keep it in the refrigerator. The rest of the spices can be added as and when required.

Masoor Dhal & Onions

(Mushoor dhal pyaj phoron diye)

Masoor dhal is to be identified by it's orange color and circular shape.

Ingredients:

2/3rd cup masoor dhal

1 tbsp. oil

1 large onion, sliced

1 tsp. turmeric powder

2 tsp. salt or to taste

Method:

Pre-cook the lentils using three cups of water. Heat oil in a saucepan and fry the onions for five minutes, stirring constantly. Add the lentils and another three cups of water and turmeric powder, heat till the mixture starts boiling, season with salt and turn off the heat.

Simple Moong Dhal

Moong dhal, on the other hand, is yellow in color and can be sold in a variety of forms.

Ingredients:

2/3rd cup yellow moong dhal

1 tsp. cumin seeds

1 tsp. turmeric powder

Chopped coriander/cilantro

2 tsp. salt or to taste

Method:

Pre-cook the lentils using three cups of water. Heat oil in a saucepan and fry the cumin seeds for a minute. Add the lentils and another three cups of water and turmeric powder, heat till the mixture starts boiling, season with salt and turn off the heat. Garnish with chopped coriander/cilantro.

Moong Dhal Fry

The trick is to add sliced tomatoes at the end, immediately before turning off the heat. This gives the dhal a tart flavor.

Ingredients:

2/3rd cup yellow moong dhal
1 onion, chopped
1 tsp. minced ginger
4 large garlic cloves minced fine
2 large tomatoes, sliced
1 tsp. cumin seeds
1 tsp. turmeric powder
Chopped coriander/cilantro
2 tsp. salt or to taste

Method:

Pre-cook the lentils using three cups of water. Heat oil in a saucepan and fry the cumin seeds for a minute. Add the sliced onions, minced ginger, minced garlic, one sliced tomato and cook, stirring constantly, for ten minutes on medium low heat. Stir in lentils and another three cups of water and turmeric powder, heat till the mixture starts boiling, season with salt and turn off the heat. Garnish with the second sliced tomato and chopped coriander/cilantro, immediately after turning off the heat.

Moong Dhal & Spinach

Ingredients:

2/3rd cup yellow moong dhal
10 oz. chopped spinach (approximately 250 gm.)
1 onion, chopped
1 tsp. minced ginger
4 large garlic cloves minced fine
2 large tomatoes, sliced
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 tsp. garam masala powder (optional)
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. lemon juice
2 tsp. salt or to taste

Method:

Pre-cook the lentils using three cups of water. Heat oil in a saucepan and fry the cumin seeds for a minute. Add the sliced onions, minced ginger, minced garlic, cumin, coriander and garam masala powders, as well as spinach and sliced tomatoes and cook, stirring constantly, for ten minutes on medium low heat. Stir in lentils with another three cups of water and turmeric powder, heat till the mixture starts boiling, season with salt and lemon juice and turn off the heat.

Green Moong Dhal

This variety is easy to spot, because of its prominent deep green color.

Ingredients:

2/3rd cup green moong dhal
1 onion, chopped
1 tsp. minced ginger
4 large garlic cloves minced fine
2 large tomatoes, sliced
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 tsp. garam masala powder (optional)
1 tsp. turmeric powder
2 tsp. salt or to taste

Method:

Pre-cook the lentils using three cups of water.

Heat oil in a saucepan and fry the cumin seeds for a minute. Add the chopped onions, minced ginger, minced garlic, cumin, coriander and garam masala powders, as well as sliced tomatoes and cook, stirring constantly, for ten minutes on medium low heat. Stir in lentils with another three cups of water and turmeric powder, heat till the mixture starts boiling, season with salt and turn off the heat.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

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Chicken

Chicken Curry

The flavor of cilantro/coriander, so widely used in Indian cuisine, lends a delightfully unique flavor to this favorite.

Ingredients:

2 lb. chicken pieces
2 onions, chopped or pureed
2 tsp. ginger paste
2 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 tomato, pureed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a saucepan and fry the onions, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powders and cilantro/coriander leaves for five minutes on low heat. Add tomato, chicken, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for half an hour, keeping the saucepan covered with a lid.

Chicken & Spinach Curry

Ingredients:

1 lb. boneless chicken, cut into thin strips
10 oz. (approximately two cups) spinach puree
2 onions pureed
2 tsp. ginger paste
2 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 tomato, pureed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a saucepan and fry the onions, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and

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coriander powders and spinach puree for five minutes on medium low heat. Add tomato, chicken, turmeric and chilli powders and salt, together with half a cup of lukewarm water, and cook on medium low heat for half an hour, keeping the saucepan covered with a lid.

Butter Chicken

What would you order from the menu chart of an Indian restaurant? One of the most popular non-vegetarian dishes is Butter Chicken. Try out this easy recipe at home.

Ingredients:

3 lbs. chicken drumsticks/ thighs/ sliced breast pieces
1 tbsp. oil
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
3 tsp. chilli powder (optional)
1 cup yogurt or buttermilk
1 cup sour cream
1/2 cup/4 oz. tomato puree
4 oz. butter
6 cardamoms
6 cloves
2 sticks cinnamon
3 tsp. salt or to taste

Method:

Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Fry the ginger, garlic, cardamoms, cinnamon and cloves on medium low heat for a minute, and add the chicken with the yogurt or buttermilk, tomato puree, sour cream, chilli powder and salt. Cook on medium low heat, stirring occasionally, for half an hour, keeping the saucepan covered with a lid. Add butter before serving.

"Kheema"(minced meat) Curry

Cooked with minced meat or ground chicken or ground turkey and potatoes, this dish can be combined with green peas, too.

Ingredients:

1 lb. minced meat/ground chicken/ground turkey
1 cup green peas, optional
2 onions pureed
1 tomato, pureed
2 tsp. ginger paste
2 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1/2 cup sour cream
1 potato, cooked and cubed

1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
2 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the onions, tomato puree, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powders and cilantro/coriander leaves for ten minutes on a low flame. Add potato, minced meat/ground chicken/ground turkey, green peas if desired, turmeric and chilli powders, sour cream and salt together with a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for half an hour.

Fried Chicken

Ingredients:

2 lb. chicken thighs/drumsticks

1 tsp. onion powder

1 tbsp. ginger paste

1 tbsp. garlic paste

1 tsp. chilli powder

Salt and pepper to taste

2 tbsp. oil

Method:

Mix the chicken, onion powder, ginger, garlic, salt, pepper and chilli powders and keep aside for a few hours in the refrigerator. Heat oil in a frying pan and fry chicken until browned on both sides and serve hot.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

Fish Curry

Fish is relished mainly in the coastal states of Bengal and Kerala. The curry forms the staple diet with plain boiled rice.

Ingredients:

1 lb. fish, cut into pieces
1 onion pureed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 tomato, pureed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the onions, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powders for five minutes. Add tomato, fish, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for twenty five minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Garlic Fish Curry

Ingredients:

1 lb. fish, cut into pieces
4 tbsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
2 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the garlic for a minute. Add fish, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for half an hour. The result will be a thick gravy covering the fish. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Fish Curry with Mustard

(Shorshe Maach)

This delicately flavored dish tastes great with plain boiled rice. It also happens to be a Bengali

delicacy.

Ingredients:

1 lb. fish, cut into pieces
2 tbsp. oil
1 tsp. turmeric powder
2 tbsp. mustard powder
1 tsp. salt
8 green chillies

Method:

Make a paste of mustard in an equal amount of water. Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the mustard paste for half a minute, and add 3 cups of lukewarm water. Bring to a boil and add fish, turmeric and salt and green chillies. Cook on medium low heat for half an hour.

Chilli Fish

The Bengali passion for fish inspired this Indo-Chinese invention(don't try looking for it in Chinese restaurants outside Calcutta - you won't find it! However, anyone who has visited a Chinese restaurant elsewhere in India will recall the Indo-Chinese chilli chicken - a dish that is essentially based on the same set of spices).

Ingredients:

1 lb. fish, cut into pieces
4 tbsp. chopped garlic
1 green bell pepper thinly sliced into long strips
1 onion thinly sliced into long strips
Salt and pepper to taste
Soy sauce to taste
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the fish seasoned with salt and pepper on medium high heat for ten minutes on either side. Remove fish, add green bell pepper and onions and salt and cook until crisp but not wilted, about ten minutes. Mix with the fish and season with soy sauce.

Fish Fry

(Matcher Fry)

Another testimony to the Bengali passion for fish- this dish is seldom to be found outside Bengal.

Ingredients:

1 lb. fish fillet, cut into pieces
1 tbsp. garlic paste

1 tsp. onion powder

1 tsp. lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste
Bread crumbs and an egg - optional
Cilantro/coriander leaves
4 tsp. oil

Method:

Mix the fish, lemon juice, salt and pepper, cilantro/coriander leaves and onion powder and keep aside for a few hours. Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the fish on medium high heat for ten minutes on either side. Optionally, dip the fish in beaten egg, coat with bread crumbs and fry.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

Seafood

Shrimp Curry

Ingredients:

1 lb. shrimps, peeled and deveined
1 onion, pureed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tomato, pureed
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 tsp. salt or to taste
1 tsp. lemon juice
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the onion, tomato, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powders and cilantro/coriander leaves for five minutes on medium low heat. Add shrimp, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for twenty five minutes. Keep the pan covered with a lid. Stir well to let the shrimps blend with the spices. Season with lemon juice, garnish with cilantro/coriander before serving.

Note: Using pre-cooked, peeled and deveined shrimp available in the grocery store to reduce preparation time.

Shrimp Curry with Mustard

The unique combination of shrimps and mustard is a culinary delight.

Ingredients:

1 lb. shrimps
2 tbsp. oil
1 tsp. turmeric
2 tbsp. mustard powder
1 tsp. salt
8 green chillies

Method:

Make a paste of mustard in an equal amount of water. Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the mustard paste and the shrimps for at least five minutes, and add 2 cups of lukewarm water.

Bring to a boil and add turmeric and salt and green chillies. Cook on medium low heat for

another twenty five minutes.

Shrimp Fry

The secret to delicious fried shrimps is deep frying with chilli powder.

Ingredients:

1 lb. shrimps
1 tbsp. oil
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tbsp. chilli powder
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. salt
1 sliced green chilli

Method:

Mix the shrimps, lemon juice, garlic and chilli powders. Heat oil in a frying pan and fry the shrimps coated with the spices. After the shrimps are done, transfer to the serving dish. Just before turning off the heat add the green chillies. Use the green chillies as a garnish. Serve hot.

Pomfret Fry

For those lucky ones who have access to the pomfret, also known as the Indian salmon.

Ingredients:

1 lb. pomfret pieces
1 tbsp. oil
1 tsp. onion powder
1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. tomato paste
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. chilli powder and 1 sliced green chilli

Method:

Mix the pomfret pieces, lemon juice, tomato paste, salt, onion, garlic and chilli powders. Heat oil in a frying pan and fry the pomfret pieces coated with the spices. After the pomfret pieces are done, transfer to the serving dish. Just before turning off the heat add the green chillies. Use the green chillies as a garnish. Serve hot.

Pomfret Curry

Ingredients:

1 lb. pomfret pieces
1/2 cup coconut milk
1 onion grated
1 tomato chopped fine

2 tsp. ginger paste
2 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. coriander powder
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the onions, tomatoes, ginger and garlic, together with cumin and coriander powders and cilantro/coriander leaves for five minutes on low heat. Add pomfret pieces, coconut milk, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for twenty five minutes.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

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Eggs

Omelet Curry

Ingredients:

4 eggs, made into omelets
1 onion, pureed
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tomato, pureed
1 boiled potato, cubed
1 tsp. salt and pepper or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and fry the onions, ginger and garlic, together with tomato puree for five minutes. Add potato, omelets, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for twenty five minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Omelets

The secret to a perfect omelet is time - cook on medium low heat and resist the temptation to turn it over. A lid over the frying pan will ensure that the omelet cooks evenly in five minutes - not more, not less. It is also a good idea to use a salt shaker, for a teaspoon of salt is likely to clump in one corner, with disastrous results.

The oil must be heated to the right temperature - or the omelet will be ruined. To be sure, drop a spoonful of the beaten eggs into the heated oil - if it starts sizzling immediately, go ahead. If not, wait and repeat the test.

Chilli & Onion Omelet

Ingredients:

2 large eggs, beaten
1 small onion chopped fine
1 tsp. chilli powder
Salt and pepper to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 green chilli, finely chopped
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Mix the eggs, onions, green chilli and chilli powder, salt and pepper, and cilantro/coriander. Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and add the mixture. Cover with a lid and cook till done. Serve immediately.

Cheese Omelet

Ingredients:

2 large eggs, beaten
1 small onion chopped fine
1 tsp. chilli powder
Salt and pepper to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 green chilli, finely chopped
1 slice pepper jack cheese, cut into 4 strips
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Mix the eggs, onions, green chilli and chilli powder, salt and pepper, and cilantro/coriander. Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and add the mixture with the cheese strips. Cover with a lid and cook till done. Serve immediately.

Tomato & Cheese Omelet

Use halved cherry tomatoes for this one- great to look at, great to eat!

Ingredients:

2 large eggs, beaten
1 small onion chopped fine
12 cherry tomatoes, halved
Salt and pepper to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 green chilli, finely chopped
1 slice pepper jack cheese, cut into 4 strips
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Mix the eggs, chopped onions, cherry tomatoes, chopped green chilli, salt and pepper, and cilantro/coriander. Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan and add the mixture with the cheese strips. Make sure that the cherry tomatoes are distributed evenly over the pan. Cover with a lid and cook till done. Serve immediately.

Egg Curry

Ingredients:

1/2 lbs. cooked potatoes cubed. Use either peeled or un-peeled potatoes according to your preference.

1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds

1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder
1 tsp. salt or to taste
4 eggs, boiled and halved
Chilli powder (optional)
1/2 lbs. tomatoes, pureed
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tablespoon oil

Method:

Heat oil in a small non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the cumin seeds for half a minute, before adding the potatoes and tomatoes, salt and turmeric and chilli powder. Cook until done (about 10 minutes), add 1/2 cup warm water, boiled eggs and simmer, then garnish with cilantro/coriander and serve.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

Rice & Pasta

Noodles

Yes, pasta can be cooked, Indian style, and taste great.

Ingredients:

1/2 lb. pasta (spaghetti is commonly used, but any pasta will do), cooked
2 large onions, sliced into thin strips
2 large tomatoes, diced
1 lb. cooked potatoes, cubed
1 tbsp. oil
Cilantro/coriander leaves
Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Heat oil in a frying pan, and fry the onions and tomatoes for five minutes. Add the cooked potato cubes, salt and pepper and pasta. Mix well, garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves and serve.

Plain Fried Rice

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cup uncooked rice (approximately 250 grams)
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. each cumin and mustard seeds
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the cumin and mustard seeds for one minute. Add rice, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with two and a half cups of lukewarm water, cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for half an hour. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Vegetable Fried Rice

Fried rice was always one of my favorite accompaniments to any meal, whether vegetarian or non-vegetarian. The only snag is that it's not the best bet for counting calories! Most recipes call for substantial amounts of oil. However I realized after trial and error that all that fat isn't at all necessary. The rule of thumb is that one teaspoon of oil be used for every half a cup of rice cooked (approximately one serving). Moreover with the addition of vegetables, this dish is complete in itself and can be served as the main course. Of course it can be eaten along with other items on the menu.

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cup uncooked rice (approximately 250 grams)
1 onion chopped fine
1 green bell pepper, chopped fine
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 large potato, peeled and cubed
1 tomato, diced
1 tsp. each cumin and mustard seeds
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the cumin and mustard seeds for one minute. Add onions, green bell pepper, tomato and potato, rice, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with two and a half cups of lukewarm water, cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for half an hour. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves

A Variation: I've found that the flavor of raw onions and tomatoes tastes equally good, so I've changed the order slightly.

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cup uncooked rice (approximately 250 grams)
1 onion chopped fine
1 green bell pepper, chopped fine
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 large potato, peeled and cubed
1 tomato, diced
1 tsp. each cumin and mustard seeds
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the cumin and mustard seeds for one minute. Add green bell pepper, potato, rice, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with two and a half cups of lukewarm water, cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for half an hour. When the rice is just done, stir in the chopped onions and tomatoes and let stand for another half an hour. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Peas Pulao

This can be an accompaniment to any meal, whether vegetarian or non-vegetarian.

For the rice:

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cup uncooked rice (approximately 250 grams)
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. each cumin and mustard seeds
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

For the peas:

Ingredients:

1 lb. shelled green peas
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin seeds
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the cumin and mustard seeds for one minute. Add rice, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with two and a half cups of lukewarm water, cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for half an hour.

While the rice is cooking, heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the cumin seeds, together with ginger and garlic, for five minutes. Add green peas, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

When the rice is done, mix the peas and garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Chicken Pulao

For the rice:

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cup uncooked rice (approximately 250 grams)
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

For the chicken:

Ingredients:

1 lb. chicken pieces
1 tsp. ginger paste

1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
2 onions chopped fine
1 large tomato chopped fine
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan or preferably a pressure cooker and fry the chopped onions and tomato, together with ginger and garlic, for five minutes. Add chicken, cilantro/coriander leaves, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium high heat for ten minutes. Stir in the rice, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with two cups of lukewarm water, cover tightly with a lid and cook on medium high heat for another fifteen minutes.

Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Mutton Pulao

For the rice:

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cup uncooked rice (approximately 250 grams)
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

For the mutton:

Ingredients:

1 lb. mutton (goat meat) pieces
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
2 onions chopped fine
1 large tomato chopped fine
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
2 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a pressure cooker and fry the chopped onions and tomato, together with ginger and garlic, for five minutes. Add mutton, cilantro/coriander leaves, turmeric and chilli powders and

salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on high heat with the lid shut tightly for ten minutes. Wait for half an hour before removing the lid. Stir in the rice, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with two cups of lukewarm water, cover tightly with the lid and cook on high heat for fifteen minutes.

Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

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Salads & "Raita"

Cucumber, Tomato & Onion Salad

Ingredients:

1 small cucumber
1 large tomato
1 small onion
1 teaspoon lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Slice the cucumber, tomato and onion. Mix with lemon juice, salt and pepper and serve.

Pickled onions

Ingredients:

6 pearl onions
Vinegar

Method:

Keep the onions soaked in vinegar. Serve as required.

Raita

(curds/ yogurt/ dahi)

Ingredients:

1 cup yogurt/curds
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 small onion, chopped fine
1 tsp. chopped green chilli
Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Mix the yogurt/curds, onion, cilantro/coriander leaves, green chilli, salt and pepper and serve.

Cucumber & Onion Raita

Ingredients:

1 cup yogurt/curds
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 small onion, chopped fine
1 small cucumber, grated
Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Mix the yogurt/curds, onion, cilantro/coriander leaves, cucumber, salt and pepper and serve.

Onion, Tomato & Cucumber Raita

Ingredients:

2 cups yogurt/curds

Cilantro/coriander leaves

1 small onion, chopped fine

1 small cucumber, grated

1 small tomato, chopped fine

1 tsp. oil

1 tsp. mustard seeds

Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Mix the yogurt/curds, onions and tomatoes, cilantro/coriander leaves, cucumber, salt and pepper.

Fry the mustard seeds in oil and add to the mixture. Serve.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

10

Desserts & Shakes

Kalakand

Ingredients:

2 cups full fat milk
1 cup cottage cheese
1/2 cup sugar

Method:

Boil milk in a heavy bottomed saucepan until it reduces to half. Add cottage cheese and sugar and mix well till it attains a semi-solid consistency.
Preheat the oven. Transfer the mixture to a square shaped oven proof dish and bake at 425 degree F for 10 minutes. Let stand in the oven for half an hour. Cut into squares and serve.

Sweet yogurt

(Misti Doi)

Ingredients:

2 cups full fat milk
1 tbsp. yogurt/curds/dahi
1/2 cup sugar

Method:

Boil milk in a heavy bottomed saucepan. Add sugar and mix well. Let the mixture cool.
Preheat the oven to warm. Transfer the mixture to an oven proof dish, add the yogurt and let stand overnight to let it set. Transfer to a refrigerator. Serve chilled.

Rice pudding

(Payesh)

Ingredients:

1/2 gallon full fat milk
2 cups cooked rice
1 cup raisins
1/2 cup sugar

Method:

Boil milk in a heavy bottomed saucepan until it reduces to half. The key to this dessert is vigilant, constant stirring to ensure that the contents do not stick to the bottom of the vessel. Add cooked rice, raisins and sugar and mix well till it attains a thick sticky consistency.

Fruit Cream

Ingredients:

1 lb. fruits (seedless grapes are best)
1 pint half and half
1 cup heavy cream/ 1 cup cool whip/ 1 cup strawberry ice cream
1/2 cup sugar

Method:

Mix the sugar, 1 pint of half and half and 1 cup heavy cream/ 1 cup cool whip/ 1 cup ice cream. Slice the fruits and add to the mixture. Refrigerate before serving.

Gajjar Halwa
(Carrot delight)

Ingredients:

1 pint half and half
10 oz. grated carrots (approximately 250 g)
1 cup raisins
1 cup cashew pieces
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup butter (approximately 4 tablespoons)

Method:

Heat the half and half in a heavy bottomed saucepan to boiling and add the grated carrots, raisins and sugar. Boil the mixture till the liquid is reduced to 1/10th of the original amount. Melt butter in a frying pan and fry the cashew pieces. Mix well and serve hot.

Shakes

Mango Shake

Ingredients:

1 quart full fat milk
2 cups sweet mango pulp
1/2 cup sugar

Method:

Peel the mangoes and separate the pulp from the seed. Pour milk into a mixer/electric blender/food processor and add the mango pulp and sugar. Mix until the mango pulp is well blended with the milk giving a pale yellow color. Chill and serve.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

Snacks & Sandwiches

Bhel Puri

Ingredients:

2 cups puffed rice (available in the cereal section of Western supermarkets)
1 cup cooked chickpeas
2 medium potatoes, cooked, peeled and cubed
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 oz. (approximately 50 g) sev/bhujia. Crushed potato chips are a pretty good, if unconventional substitute
2 oz. (approximately 50 g) salted peanuts
1 tbsp. tomato sauce
1/2 tsp. salt or to taste

Method:

Mix the puffed rice, chickpeas, potatoes, onions and peanuts. Add tomato sauce, mix well and then sprinkle salt and the sev/potato chips. The mixture must be made immediately before serving, or the puffed rice will turn soggy.

Tomato & Cucumber Sandwich

Ingredients:

1 small cucumber, sliced
1 large tomato, sliced
Fresh sandwich bread
Butter
Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Arrange tomato and cucumber slices seasoned with salt and pepper over buttered bread.

Tomato & Onion Sandwich

Ingredients:

1 small onion, sliced
1 large tomato, sliced
Fresh Bread
Butter
Salt and Pepper

Method:

Arrange tomato and onion slices seasoned with salt and pepper over the bread buttered on both sides. Toast in sandwich toaster and serve hot with tomato sauce.

Tomato & Green Pepper Sandwich

Ingredients:

1 small green bell pepper, sliced
1 large tomato, sliced
Fresh Bread
Butter
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Pepper to taste

Method:

Arrange tomato and green bell pepper slices seasoned with salt and pepper over the bread buttered on both sides. Toast in sandwich toaster and serve hot with tomato sauce.

Potato stuffed pitas/pocket breads

Thus is an improvisation on the traditional *alu paratha*

Ingredients:

2 cups mashed potatoes
1 small onion, chopped fine
Chopped cilantro/coriander
2 tbsp. butter
Salt and pepper to taste
5 pocket breads (10 halves)

Method:

Mix the mashed potatoes with half the butter, onions, salt, pepper and cilantro/coriander. Stuff into pocket breads. Serve hot immediately with the remaining butter spread on the outer surfaces of the pocket breads, and tomato sauce for dipping.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

Indo - American

In my new role as housewife, I was eager to try out all sorts of recipes, both from India and the country of my domicile, America. At first I was disheartened. While the former did not really present any challenges, for obvious reasons, American cuisine was a different matter altogether. I had almost no experience with grills and ovens, a serious shortcoming since the majorities of magazine recipes called for baked dishes. The ingredients were mostly foreign to me, and I would have to put together a long shopping list before my kitchen was suitably equipped (that is exactly why I can sympathize with the American housewife who wishes to experiment with Indian cuisine, the exotic spices listed in our recipes must seem equally daunting). It was then I chanced upon some Creole dishes. The basic ingredients were the same as those used in any Indian kitchen. Better still, I could cook over an open flame. Once I had tried out the following formula for Shrimp Creole, I knew that I had succeeded.

Shrimp Creole

Ingredients:

1 lb. shrimps peeled and deveined
6 large cloves of garlic, sliced fine and 1 tsp. garlic powder
1 tsp. onion powder
1 lb. tomatoes (approximately 6 large tomatoes, diced)
1 tsp. salt and pepper or to taste
2 tbsp. oil
Cilantro/coriander leaves

Method:

Heat the oil in a small non-stick frying pan (or skillet), and fry the shrimps with garlic, tomatoes and cilantro/coriander leaves, onion and garlic powders, salt and pepper, for fifteen minutes.

Broccoli Potato Curry

As I started shopping in American grocery stores, I was tempted by the sight of green broccoli. I couldn't wait before I had cooked the green florets with Indian spices. I never regretted it.

Ingredients:

1 lb. broccoli florets
1 tsp. ginger paste
1 tsp. garlic paste
1 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 tsp. cumin seeds
1 tomato, diced
1 potato, cooked and cubed
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a non-stick frying pan (or skillet) and fry the cumin seeds together with tomato, ginger and garlic, for five minutes. Add potato, broccoli florets, turmeric and chilli powders and salt together with half a cup of lukewarm water and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Gumbo

An interesting mixture of the gumbo blend with Indian spices.

Ingredients:

1 lb. Gumbo blend
1/2 lb. shrimps peeled and deveined (optional)
1/4 tsp. cumin powder
1/4 tsp. coriander powder
1/4 tsp. turmeric powder
1 tsp. chilli powder
1 large tomato, diced
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tbsp. oil (2 tbsp. if shrimps are used)
2 cups cooked rice

Method:

Heat the oil in a small non-stick frying pan (or skillet), and fry the shrimp (optional) and tomato, with cumin, coriander, turmeric and chilli powders together for fifteen minutes. Add the gumbo blend, season with salt and pepper, and cook until done, then add rice.

Jambalaya (Vegetarian)

Ingredients:

1 1/4 cup uncooked rice (approximately 250 grams)
1 onion chopped fine
1 green bell pepper, chopped fine
1 tsp. chilli powder
2 large tomatoes, diced
1 lb. sliced mushrooms
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the onions, mushrooms, green bell pepper, tomato, rice, cilantro/coriander leaves and chilli powders and salt. Add two and a half cups of lukewarm water, cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for half an hour. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Broccoli & Mushroom Pilaf

I've mentioned before that I was not familiar with broccoli till I came to the US. This dish is another instance of how the colorful vegetable blends perfectly with mushrooms and rice. The result is a flavorful combination that can stand on its own as a main course, besides being used as a side dish. In addition to being low on calories, it requires little preparation time and is a blessing for vegetarians. In fact, I am a vegetarian for two days of the week for religious reasons, and this pilaf is often my lunch!

Ingredients:

3 cups cooked rice
4 large cloves garlic, minced fine
1 lb. chopped broccoli/ broccoli cuts/ broccoli florets
1/2 lb. sliced mushrooms
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the garlic for a minute, then add mushrooms, broccoli, ground cinnamon, cilantro/coriander leaves and salt. Cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for ten minutes. Add cooked rice just before turning off the heat. Let stand for five minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

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Indo - Mexican

Cauliflower & Potatoes

At the Mexican fast food joints, I was surprised by the striking similarities with Indian cuisine. When I dipped corn chips into salsa, I knew that I was going to use the versatile salsa as a key ingredient in my curries - it can transform almost any dish, bland or otherwise, into a spicy surprise. It also reduces preparation times - drastically!

Ingredients:

1 tsp. cumin seeds
1 lb. chopped cauliflower (frozen cauliflower will do, too)
1/2 lb. cooked potatoes, cubed
1 tsp. minced ginger
1 tsp. turmeric powder
2 tbsp. chunky salsa (mild or medium according to preferences)
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the cumin seeds and ginger for a minute, then add chopped cauliflower, cooked potato cubes, turmeric powder, salsa, cilantro/coriander leaves and salt. Mix well. Cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Chickpeas & Salsa

Ingredients:

1 (12 oz.) packet chopped onions
1 tsp. minced ginger
1 tsp. garlic powder
2 lb. boiled chickpeas (two cans, approximately)
1/2 lb. cooked potatoes, cubed (optional)
1 tsp. turmeric powder
2 tbsp. chunky salsa (mild or medium according to preferences)
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the chopped onions and minced ginger for five minutes, then add boiled chickpeas, cooked potato cubes (if desired), turmeric powder, salsa, cilantro/coriander leaves and salt. Mix well. Cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Mixed Vegetables & Salsa

Ingredients:

1 lb. mixed vegetables
1 tbsp. onion powder
1 tbsp. tomato paste
1 tsp. minced ginger
1 tsp. garlic powder
1/2 lb. cooked potatoes, cubed (optional)
2 tbsp. chunky salsa (mild or medium according to preferences)
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the mixed vegetables and minced ginger for a minute, then add onion powder, tomato paste, cooked potato cubes (if desired), garlic powder, salsa, cilantro/coriander leaves and salt. Mix well. Cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Shrimps & Salsa

Ingredients:

1 lb. shrimps, peeled and deveined
1 tbsp. onion powder
1 tbsp. tomato paste
1 tsp. minced ginger
1 tsp. garlic powder
2 tbsp. chunky salsa (mild or medium according to preferences)
1 tsp. salt or to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the shrimps and minced ginger for a minute, then add onion powder, tomato paste, garlic powder, salsa, cilantro/coriander leaves and salt. Mix well. Cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for fifteen minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

Chicken Vegetable Pilaf & Salsa

Ingredients:

6 cups cooked rice
4 large cloves garlic, minced
1/2 lb. chopped broccoli/ broccoli cuts/ broccoli florets
1/2 lb. sliced mushrooms

1/2 lb. cooked potatoes, cubed
1/2 lb. sliced cooked chicken
2 tbsp. medium salsa
Salt and pepper to taste
Cilantro/coriander leaves
1 tbsp. oil

Method:

Heat oil in a heavy bottomed saucepan and fry the garlic for a minute, then add mushrooms, broccoli, cooked chicken slices, cooked potato cubes, salsa, cilantro/coriander leaves and salt. Cover with the lid and cook on medium low heat for ten minutes. Add cooked rice just before the turning off the heat. Let stand for five minutes. Garnish with cilantro/coriander leaves.

30 minute Indian Cuisine

Indian cooking in India vs. Indian cooking in the West

The average middle-class Indian housewife can get away with minimum cooking, if she knows the way out. The average American housewife can't, unless she has the will power to suffer insipid frozen/canned dinners, day after boring day.

The reason -affordable and easily available labor back home. My mother in Calcutta has had a cook for years and a maidservant for as long as I can remember. Whenever I stayed away from home, I had no difficulty in locating some caterer who would deliver my meals to my doorstep at no extra charge.

So on my second day in the US, I realized that I had one serious disadvantage. No household help whatsoever. Most middle class Indian housewives have maidservants who will come in, clean up the kitchen and do the dishes. For a few extra rupees they will wash and chop the vegetables and grind the spices. For a monthly salary most of us can afford to pay, they will cook entire lunches and dinners, every day. In America, I had no such luxury. I had to look for ways to make things easier for myself, or else spend the whole day in the kitchen.

Gradually I learnt what to look for in the Western supermarket, and I wasn't disappointed. I found chopped onions in the frozen vegetable section, sparing myself the time, trouble and tears involved! I found shredded cabbage tucked away in a corner on the salad shelves, and so on and so forth.

(A note of caution: don't overdo it. Sooner or later every one discovers that canned potatoes are a poor substitute for boiled, baked or microwave-cooked potatoes. Yes, there are certain necessities I try not to compromise on. For instance, there is no substitute for the flavor of freshly chopped tomatoes, however strong the temptation to buy tomato paste or canned tomatoes may be. The same goes for fresh garlic- no amount of garlic powder or bottled garlic will have the same effect.)

Agreed, compromises have to be made - chopped onions, shredded cabbage etc. Like I've mentioned before, the solution lies in making the most out of all the products the Western grocery store has to offer, and knowing what to do and what not to do with them to come up with a great meal!

30 minute Indian Cuisine