

Home style curry

Curry is a generic western term for a dish comprising of a sauce made with a complex mix of herbs and spices which originates from Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Thai or other Southeast Asian cuisines.

The word curry itself is a bit of a mystery but we think it could have been anglicised from the Tamil word kari meaning 'sauce', which is usually understood to mean vegetables and/or meat cooked with spices with or without a gravy.

Curry is a real favourite of mine, in any form, but I get annoyed at these so called curries where you can't taste anything because there is just so much heat and spice.

A good curry should scream flavour and any heat should be a slow build as background. So you may have guessed, you are never going to see a vindaloo recipe here :0)

One of my favourite things is a good tangy tomato flavour with that background heat, so I'm going to share my recipe for this sauce. As an extra bonus, this sauce works just as well with chicken, lamb or fish (I recently made it with smoked haddock – lovely).

I got this recipe from Santa... Yup you read it right. :0) I was given a fantastic curry recipe book as a present from a secret Santa at work a few years back. It is filled with traditional curry recipes as cooked in the home in India rather than the favourites we all know from takeaways and restaurants.

This recipe is the first curry I learned from the book and

I've tweaked it a little since then to make it perfect to my tastes.

Making your curry

The most important step to getting your curry right is the onion. Frying the onions correctly will make a big difference to both the taste and look of your curry. The secret – patience.

Ok this recipe will make my home-style curry for 2 people.

Ingredients for the sauce

- 4 table spoons of oil
- 1 large onion, chopped into strips
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1/4 inch piece of ginger, finely chopped
- 3/4 teaspoon coriander powder
- 3/4 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1/4 teaspoon garam masala powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika powder
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- salt
- chopped coriander (garnish)

As I said, you can make this curry with chicken, lamb, fish or vegetables so here are my measures for each.

- Chicken Curry – 450g chicken
- Lamb Curry – 300g stewing lamb
- Fish Curry – 2 fillets of fish
- Vegetable Curry – 225 g mixed veg – I like cauliflower.

Step by step

Heat the oil in a large heavy based pan and add the onion. You want to sauté this gently for about 20 – 25 mins to get the onions really soft and deep brown. This is important, you really need to keep the heat to medium and take your time.

Once you are happy with the onions, add the garlic and ginger and fry for 1 minute, then add the coriander powder and keep stirring for a further minute.

Next you can add the turmeric, garam masala and paprika. Again keep this moving in the pan so that the spices fry off but don't burn, fry for 30 seconds.

Now add 200ml of water give it a good stir and let this simmer for 10 minutes. Then add your tomatoes and give it a further simmer for 10 minutes.

This is your basic curry sauce ready, just season to taste.

Now you can add the meat or veg of your choice.

- chicken – add 300ml of water

- lamb – add 500ml of water
- fish – add 200ml of water, or
- vegetables – add 400ml of water
- and simmer until the meat or veg is cooked – stirring frequently.

Serve with rice or flat breads.