

Eli Palat (Sour Dal with Salted Dry Fish and Drumsticks)

Serves: 4 to 6

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Cooking Time: 1 hour



Ingredients:

1 cup *Chana Dal/Split Black Chickpeas*

Salt to taste

2 tablespoons *Oil*

2 teaspoons *Cumin Seeds/Jeera*

1 teaspoon *Brown Mustard Seeds/Rai*

1/2 teaspoon *Fenugreek Seeds/Methi*

2 cups *Onions* - finely chopped

3 ounces *Salted Dried Fish*

1 large stem *Curry Leaves* (about 1/4 cup loosely packed)

2 cups *Tomatoes* - finely chopped

1 tablespoon *Ginger* - grated or finely chopped

2 tablespoons *Garlic* - crushed or finely chopped

2 teaspoons *Red Chili Powder*

1/4 teaspoon *Turmeric Powder*

1 teaspoon *Coriander Powder*

1/2 teaspoon *Cumin Powder*

13 ounces *Eggplant/Brinjal* - cut into 1 inch cubes

12 ounces *Vegetable Drumsticks* (fresh or frozen) - if fresh scrape outer fiber layers with knife and cut into 2 1/2 inch pieces

3/4 cup *Tamarind Pulp* (adjust to taste)

1 *Jalapeno* or *Any Green Chili* - cut in chunks

1/4 cup *Cilantro* - roughly chopped

1 teaspoon *Garam Masala Powder*

4 *Hard Boiled Eggs* - shelled and cut in half

Optional Vegetables:

2 cups *Long Beans* - cut into 2 inch pieces

1 small *Carrot* - cut into 1 inch cubes

4 *Okras/Lady Fingers* - cut stem tip and cut into 2 inch pieces

*Combination of any other vegetables such as potatoes, winged beans, bottle gourd and white radish

Directions:

1. Pressure cook Dal over medium low heat with 3 cups of water and a pinch of salt for 4 whistles or 6 minutes after cooker starts steaming.
2. Turn off heat and keep aside until all pressure/steam has been released for about 10 to 15 minutes. Open cooker and stir with wire whisk to crush & smooth it out. Keep this aside.
3. Meanwhile, heat oil in a large pot over high heat. Add cumin seeds, mustard seeds, fenugreek seeds and cook for few seconds until mustard seeds start to pop.
4. Add onion, salted dried fish and sauté for few minutes until onion is wilted.
5. Add curry leaves and stirring frequently, continue cooking until onion is lightly golden brown.
6. Reduce heat to medium and add tomatoes, ginger, garlic, red chili powder, turmeric powder, coriander powder, cumin powder and stir well. Cover and cook for few minutes until tomatoes are crushed.
7. Add eggplant and drumsticks along with long beans, carrots and any other vegetable (if using). If it is getting dry, add some water.

8. Stir well, reduce heat to low, cover and cook for about 10 minutes or until eggplants are soft.
9. Increase heat to high, add crushed Dal, tamarind pulp, and about 6 cups of water, cover and bring it to a boil
10. Once it comes to a rolling boil, add Okra and salt to taste.
11. Reduce heat to low and let it simmer partially covered for 15 to 20 minutes or until all vegetables soft and cooked through adding more water to adjust consistency as required.
12. Garnish with Jalapeno, cilantro and garam masala powder. Turn off heat and cover the pot and leave it covered for about 5 minutes.
13. When ready to serve, place couple of hard boiled egg halves in a serving bowl and pour over liquid & vegetables, and serve hot.

Note:

- To cook without pressure cooker, place Dal in a bowl and wash with few washes of water. Fill enough water to cover Dal by couple inches and let it soak for at least 4 hours. Wash one more time and transfer to a pot. Add salt and enough water to cover it by few inches. Cook uncovered over medium to low heat, stirring occasionally to make sure it is not scorching at the bottom of the pot. Cook until dal is tender adding more water as required.
- Amount of tamarind used for this dish will depend on the sourness of the tamarind itself and the amount of water used in making the pulp. Add few teaspoons at a time and adjust according to your desired sourness of the dish.