



Bengal Red Dal with Spices

Makes 6 servings ~ \$8.71 (\$1.45 per serving)

The red lentils are first cooked with turmeric and fresh roasted green chilies until they become a puree. Next the puree is infused with the pungent flavors of onion, ginger and tomatoes. Finally a perfumed and spiced olive oil with bay leaves and chile d'arbol dried red chile pods and, minced garlic finish the lentils.

Ingredients

The dal:

1 1/2 cups red lentils
4 1/2 cups water
6 green chilies, fresh, roasted, peeled and seeded Anaheim (or any New Mexico variety)

1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt

The flavorings:

1/4 cup olive oil
1 Tablespoon fresh ginger root, peeled and grated

1 cup yellow onion, peeled and minced
1 cup finely chopped tomatoes

For the spicy perfume:

2 Tablespoons olive oil
1/4 teaspoon fennel seeds
1/4 teaspoon fenugreek seeds
4 bay leaves
2 teaspoons minced garlic

1/4 teaspoon cumin seeds
1/4 teaspoon mustard seeds
1/4 teaspoon nigella seeds
4 dried chile d'arbol red peppers

Directions

1. Pick over the lentils to clean and wash in many changes of water. In a big pot, put in the lentils, water, turmeric and salt. Put in a large pot, the lentils, chilies, turmeric, water and salt.
2. Bring to a boil, stirring often, so that the lentils do not lump. Over a medium heat, partially covered, cook the lentils for 25 minutes. Then reduce the heat and cover, and cook for an additional 10 minutes.
3. While the lentils cook, heat the olive oil over medium high heat and sauté the onion until golden brown stirring for about 10 minutes. Add the ginger and tomatoes, stirring constantly to prevent burning until there is a reduced thick pulp, about 8 minutes.
4. Add the onion and tomatoes mixture and salt to taste to the dal and cook stirring over a low simmer for 10 minutes.
5. In a small frying pan heat the olive oil until it is hot and then quickly add the dry spices and when the cumin turns just a bit darker, in about 15 SECONDS, add the bay leaves, and chilies. Cook another 15 seconds and turn off the heat. Add the garlic and stir about 25 more seconds and then add to the dal, mix well and serve – but be sure to tell your guests to NOT eat the red chile pods – push them to the side and discard – they are for flavoring only.

Serve with a favorite simple grain such as plain rice, or millet with a hot vegetable, or a vegetable salad.

Adapted by Marion Miller for Café Pasqual's. From Classic Indian Vegetarian and Grain Cooking, by Julie Sahni, Morrow 1985

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