

Amritsari Paneer Bhurji

Medium · Vegetarian · ± 2 to 4 people · 40 min

Bhurji means crumbly. The paneer is grated rather than cubed, so it takes up the sauce everywhere.

You make your own spice mix from whole spices that you toast briefly and then grind. That gives more aroma than ready-made powder. You make more than you need, so keep the rest in a sealed jar.

Start with the three preparations: the ginger garlic paste, the yoghurt mixture and the spice mix.

Spiciness. This is the amount of chilli as it is used in India. For a milder dish, change only these two things: leave out the green chillies and use half the Kashmiri chili powder. The rest of the recipe stays the same.

Tip. Taste how spicy the dish is before you add the spice mix. If it is mild use 2 tbsp, and if it is already well spiced 1 tbsp is enough.

Ingredients

1. Ginger and garlic

- 2.5 cm fresh ginger, peeled and roughly sliced
- 7 to 8 garlic cloves
- 1 green chilli (optional)

2. Yoghurt mixture

- 125 ml yoghurt, beaten
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 2 tsp Kashmiri chili powder
- ½ tbsp ground coriander

3. Spice mix (bhurji masala)

- ½ tbsp black peppercorns
- 2 to 4 cloves
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 6 to 7 black cardamom pods
- 1 heaped tbsp kasuri methi (dried fenugreek leaves)

For the dish

- 3 tbsp mustard oil
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 3 medium onions, grated
- 2 medium tomatoes, grated
- salt to taste

- ¼ tsp sugar (optional)
- 1 tbsp coriander stems, finely chopped
- 250 ml hot water
- 1 to 2 tbsp of the spice mix
- 80 ml water
- 3 tbsp fresh coriander, finely chopped
- 500 g paneer, grated
- 1 tbsp butter

Method

1. First make the ginger garlic ready: crush the ginger, garlic and green chilli (optional) in a mortar to a coarse paste.
2. Then take a bowl and make the yoghurt mixture: stir 125 ml beaten yoghurt, ½ tsp turmeric, 2 tsp Kashmiri chili powder and ½ tbsp ground coriander.
3. Now make the spice mix. Heat a dry frying pan, turn the heat low and add the peppercorns, cloves, coriander seeds, cumin seeds and black cardamom pods. Toast for about a minute, stirring throughout, until you can smell them clearly.
4. Add 1 heaped tbsp kasuri methi, toast another 15 seconds and turn off the heat. Let it cool and then grind it fine. The spice mix is ready. You will have more than you need, so keep the rest in a sealed jar.
5. In a large pan or wok heat 3 tbsp mustard oil until you see fumes. Turn the heat low, add 1 tsp cumin seeds and let them splutter.
6. Add the ginger garlic paste and fry it for 1 minute. Then add the grated onions, turn the heat to medium and fry until the onions become glazed. Make sure to keep an eye on the onions. Because onions are grated, they will become brown fast. This takes 5 to 10 minutes. Note: they do not need to brown, move on as soon as they soften a little.
7. Stir in the yoghurt mixture to mix everything in the bowl and then add it to the pan. Cook until it is well combined and the raw smell of the spices is gone. That takes 3 to 4 minutes over medium-high heat.
8. Add the grated tomatoes with salt to taste and ¼ tsp sugar if using. Mix well and fry for about 1 minute.
9. Add 1 tbsp finely chopped coriander stems and just enough hot water to make everything in the pan mix well and flow around. Cover with a lid and cook on low flame for 10 to 15 minutes. Keep checking occasionally and keep stirring to prevent the spices sticking at the bottom of the pan. If mixture becomes dry, add a splash of warm water and cook it further.
10. Now taste how spicy it is. If it is mild, add 2 tbsp of the spice mix (paneer bhurji masala), otherwise 1 tbsp. Cook until the mixture goes dry and oil starts to separate giving the spices time to roast.
11. Add about 80 ml hot water and mix everything well. The sauce turns browner now from the spices. Cook another 3 to 4 minutes.

- 12.** Add 500 g grated paneer followed by 2 tbsp chopped coriander and mix everything together gently. Cook a few minutes until the paneer is heated through and the sauce is as thick as you like it.
- 13.** Finally garnish with 1 tbsp butter and 1 tbsp chopped coriander leaves. This dish tastes delicious with roti, chapati or naan.