

Chana Masala

Easy · Vegetarian · ± 4 to 5 people · 45 min · Ahead: 6 to 8 hrs or overnight soaking

Everything goes into the pressure cooker at once here. Afterwards you mash the cooked onions and tomatoes into a thick sauce, so there is no separate frying.

Dried chickpeas need to soak at least 6 to 8 hours, preferably overnight. Throw the soaking water away and rinse them well.

No pressure cooker? In an ordinary covered pan it takes an hour and a half to two hours. Keep an eye on the liquid.

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. Sauce too thin? Mash a few more chickpeas. Too thick? A splash of hot water. Swap the ghee for oil for a vegan version.

Ingredients

Into the pressure cooker

- 250 g chickpeas, soaked
- 3 medium onions, roughly chopped
- 4 medium tomatoes, roughly chopped
- ½ to 1 green chilli, slit
- 5 cm fresh ginger, grated
- 8 to 10 garlic cloves, whole and peeled
- 2 small bay leaves
- 5 cm cinnamon stick
- 1 black cardamom pod
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp Kashmiri chili powder
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp garam masala
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp ghee (clarified butter)
- 700 ml water

For the tadka

- 1 to 2 tbsp ghee
- ½ tsp carom seeds (ajwain)

- ½ green chilli, sliced
- a handful of ginger, julienned
- a handful of fresh coriander, chopped

To finish

- 1 tsp garam masala
- a large pinch of kasuri methi (dried fenugreek leaves)

Method

1. Wash the chickpeas and soak them overnight, or at least 6 to 8 hours. Pour the soaking water away and rinse them well.
2. Put the chickpeas in the pressure cooker along with everything from the first list: the onions, the tomatoes, the green chilli, the grated ginger, the whole garlic cloves, the bay leaves, the cinnamon, the black cardamom, the cumin seeds, the ground spices, the salt, 1 tbsp ghee and 700 ml water.
3. Stir everything together. Put the lid on and cook over high heat until the first whistle. Then lower the heat and cook another 15 minutes.
4. Turn off the heat and let the cooker depressurise by itself. Only open the lid once the pressure is gone.
5. Everything has softened now: the tomatoes have collapsed, the garlic is butter-soft and the chickpeas are cooked through but still whole.
6. Fish out the tomato skins and discard them. Remove the bay leaves, the cinnamon stick and the black cardamom too.
7. Turn the heat back on and bring everything to the boil. Stir well so the tomatoes and onions melt completely into the chickpeas.
8. Within a couple of minutes it all comes together. If anything still looks chunky, press it flat with the back of a ladle.
9. Mash a few chickpeas as well. That gives the sauce a thicker, more textured consistency.
10. Cook another 10 to 15 minutes, stirring now and then. You get a lovely thick sauce without any separate frying.
11. Too thick? A splash of hot water. Too thin? Mash a few more chickpeas.
12. Add 1 tsp garam masala and a large pinch of kasuri methi, crushed between your hands. Mix, taste and adjust the salt.
13. Now make the tadka: heat a small pan with 1 to 2 tbsp ghee.
14. Once the ghee is hot, add ½ tsp carom seeds and let them splutter.
15. Add the sliced green chilli and the julienned ginger, stir quickly and pour the tadka straight over the chickpeas.

16. Stir through fresh chopped coriander. Good with rice or kulcha.