

Palak Paneer

Easy · Vegetarian · ± 4 people · 40 min

Palak paneer is one of the best known vegetable dishes of North India.

Cook the spinach briefly. Spinach left too long on the heat loses its fresh green colour and turns dull and brownish, which is why we blanch it and cool it straight away.

The cashews make the sauce creamy without any cream and take the sharp edge off the spinach.

Black salt (kala namak) is optional. It smells faintly sulphurous and gives the dish a savoury flavour. Available at an Indian grocer.

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. Do not boil the spinach longer than 2 minutes and then put it into ice cold water. That keeps the colour deep green.

Ingredients

For the spinach purée

- 500 g fresh spinach
- 10 cashew nuts, unsalted
- 1 to 2 green chillies
- a handful of fresh coriander

For the sauce

- 2 tbsp sunflower oil
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 tbsp garlic, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp ginger, finely chopped
- 3 medium onions, thinly sliced
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp Kashmiri chili powder
- ½ tsp black salt (kala namak), optional
- salt to taste
- 60 ml Greek yoghurt
- 250 g paneer, cubed
- pinch of garam masala
- fresh lemon juice

Method

1. Bring water to the boil and put the spinach in for 2 minutes. Lift it out and put it straight into ice cold water. Meanwhile soak 10 cashews in boiling water for 5 minutes.
2. Put the drained spinach in a blender with 1 to 2 green chillies, a handful of coriander and the soaked cashews. Blend to a smooth purée.
3. Heat 2 tbsp oil in a pan. Add 1 tsp cumin seeds, 2 tbsp garlic, 1 tbsp ginger and the 3 thinly sliced onions.
4. Fry the onions until lightly browned. Then add 1 tsp ground cumin, ½ tsp turmeric, 1 tsp Kashmiri chili powder, ½ tsp black salt and salt to taste, and stir well.
5. Add 60 ml Greek yoghurt, mix, and cook until the raw smell of the spices is gone.
6. Stir in the spinach purée and cook over medium heat until the colour turns a lighter green. Stir now and then.
7. Fold in 250 g paneer cubes and let everything simmer another 5 to 10 minutes.
8. Turn off the heat. Finish with a pinch of garam masala and a squeeze of fresh lemon, and serve.