

Chana Dal

1. Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 cups chana dal or yellow split peas, soaked, washed and drained. Soak for at least 2 hours in water with some lemon juice
- 5 cups water
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 2 thin slices of unpeeled ginger (or 2 Tsps of ginger paste)
- 1/4 to 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon garam masala
- 3 tablespoons ghee or coconut oil
- 1/2 teaspoon whole cumin seeds
- 1 to 2 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped (1-3 Tsps garlic paste)
- 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon red chili powder

Preparation:

Put the dal in a heavy pot along with the water. Bring to a boil and remove any surface scum. Add the turmeric and ginger. Cover, leaving the lid just very slightly ajar, turn heat to low, and simmer gently for one and a half hours or until the dal is tender. Stir every 5 minutes or so during the last half hour of cooking to prevent sticking. Remove the ginger slices. Add the salt and garam masala to the dal. Stir to mix.

Heat the ghee in a small frying pan over medium heat. When hot, put in the cumin seeds. A couple of seconds later, put in the garlic. Stir and fry until the garlic pieces are lightly browned. Put the chili powder into the pan. Immediately lift the pan off the heat and pour the mixture into the pot with the dal. Stir to mix.

2. Ingredients

1 cup chana dal
7 cup water
1 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon cayenne
1/4 teaspoon turmeric powder
1/4 teaspoon cumin powder
1/4 teaspoon coriander powder
1 tablespoon tamarind pulp -or-
1 tablespoon lemon juice -and-
1 teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1/4 teaspoon black mustard seeds
1 clove garlic; chopped

Directions: How to Cook Chana Dal

This is in response to requests I've seen here from time to time. The following recipes are from *_Flavors of India: Recipes from the Vegetarian Hindu Cuisine_*, by Shanta N. Sacharoff, reprinted without permission. Comments in parentheses are mine, and I've paraphrased some portions. I've tried these and several other recipes from this book & highly recommend it!

These dals are great served with rice or one of the Indian breads, and adding a good hot curry and several condiments almost makes a feast! My favorite condiments are mango chutney (which comes preserved in a jar like jam) and cucumber raita (beat 1 c, plain yogurt with a fork and add a diced, peeled cucumber, 1/4 t. salt, couple pinches cayenne and maybe some coriander or mustard powder -- should be cooling rather than spicy). Wonderful drinks can be made with the sweetened mango pulp available canned in most Indian groceries (or obviously with a blender and fresh mangos if available) -- just mix with milk or with tonic water and lime. Canned leechie fruits in syrup make an easy desert.

Chana dal is the larger of the skinned, split, yellow dals you will find in an Indian grocery -- it closely resembles the yellow split peas found in Western supermarkets, and in fact these yellow split peas make an acceptable substitute.

Measure the dal into a bowl and sort through it to remove any un-skinned (dark) dal, small stones or other debris. Soak the chana dal in 4 c. water for 2-3 hours, then wash under running water and drain. Bring 3 c. water and the salt to boil in a medium-size pot. Add the chana dal and wait for the water to begin its second boil, then cover the pot and cook over medium-to-low heat for 30 min. At this time, remove the cover and stir up the dal. To the open pot add the cayenne, turmeric, cumin, coriander and the tamarind pulp (skin & seeds removed). Stir well and simmer uncovered while you prepare the next step.

In a separate small pot or frying pan, heat the vegetable oil over low heat and add the mustard seeds and chopped garlic to it. When the oil gets hot, the mustard seeds will begin to pop (really, and they may spatter a bit.). When they have ceased popping, add the oil mixture to the simmering pot of dal. Immediately cover the pot and keep covered for 2 min. while the dal continues to simmer. Then remove the cover and stir once with a spoon to mix in the new ingredients. Cook uncovered for another 5 min. and the dal is ready to be served with rice or bread. Taste to correct seasoning (i.e. salt, also, I tend to increase the amounts of all spices a bit, keeping proportions the same.) This dal is fairly thick in consistency and should not be made thinned with water. Serves 4-6.