The recipe I return to...

Winter warmer chickpea curry

Serves 12



Indu Patel, a member of Churchdown u3a's cookery group describes herself as an instinctive cook and loves creating recipes. "This flavour-packed curry serves about 12, and freezes well. The chickpeas can be swapped out for other protein such as cooked chicken, tofu, grilled paneer cheese, or beans."

Ingredients

2 large onions, peeled and chopped
2 green chillies, roughly chopped (optional)
2in/5cm piece of fresh ginger
5 cloves of garlic, peeled and crushed
1 can of chopped tomatoes
3 tbsp of coriander seeds (for grinding)
3 tbsp of cumin seeds
1/2 bunch of fresh coriander
4 tbsp of vegetable oil
2 star anise, left whole
6 cardamom pods
1 large cinnamon stick, broken up in large pieces
1 tbsp of black mustard seeds
1tsp of turmeric
2 tbsp of tomato puree
2 vegetable stock cubes
1 tbsp of garam masala
4 400g cans of chickpeas, drained (save the liquid)
Salt to taste
1 tbsp dry fenugreek leaves (optional)



Batch it up!

Enjoy these recipes straight away if you're feeding a crowd, or divide into portions and freeze for another day

Method

1 Blitz the chopped onions to a paste in a food processor, then put in a dish and set aside. Next blitz the green chillies (if using), the peeled ginger and garlic to make a paste. Remove mixture to a separate dish. Finally, blitz the chopped tomatoes until smooth.

2 Toast the coriander seeds and 1 tbsp of the cumin seeds in a dry frying pan, over a low heat, cool slightly and then dry grind using a pestle and mortar or a spice grinder.

3 Chop fresh coriander leaves and stalks separately.

4 Heat oil in a large casserole on medium-high heat, then add star anise, cardamom pods and cinnamon stick. Cook for 20-30 seconds, then add the black mustard seeds and remaining 2 tbsp of cumin seeds. Cover the pan and heat until they start to pop.

5 Turn down the heat, then add the onions and cook, stirring frequently, until they are caramelised and turn golden brown.

6 Add the chilli, ginger and garlic paste and cook well, stirring frequently for about 30 seconds.

7 Add the toasted ground coriander and cumin seeds along with the turmeric and cook for another 10 seconds before adding the blitzed tomatoes, tomato puree, crumbled stock cubes, garam masala and coriander stalks and cook for about 20 minutes.

8 Meanwhile, drain the chickpeas and save some of the liquid (If the curry seems dry, add a little to the pot).

9 Add chickpeas and a little more of the drained liquid and cook for further 15 minutes or until the chickpeas are heated through. Add salt to your taste, then lightly crumbled fenugreek leaves if using, and stir through.

10 Garnish with chopped coriander leaves if serving straight away.

To freeze, cool then portion and freeze. Defrost portions thoroughly, then heat gently in a pan until piping hot.



Cookery writer **Beverley Jarvis from Ashford & Wyre u3a** suggests this simple traybake for a no-effort dinner that is truly satisfying

Another one to try...

Chicken, butternut squash & red onion traybake

Serves 4-8

This is a great dish to have up your sleeve as it takes no time at all, and is very adaptable - swap in other vegetables you happen to have such as courgettes or leeks. It freezes really well, making mealtimes even more convenient.

Ingredients

600g butternut squash, peeled and cubed
1 red and 1 yellow pepper, roughly chopped
2 medium red onions, cut into wedges
1 rounded tbsp chicken or vegetable seasoning
3 tbsp olive oil
2 tsp dried oregano
Salt and pepper
8 chicken thighs, skin on, bone in, excess skin trimmed
100g crumbled feta cheese
Fresh chopped parsley (optional)

Method

1 Heat oven to 200C, 180C fan, gas mark 6.

2 Place prepared vegetables on a large roasting tray, spreading them out evenly. Sprinkle over the seasoning, olive oil, oregano and seasoning. Arrange chicken thighs on top.

3 Using two spoons or clean hands, toss everything together well, ending up with chicken, skin side up, on top of layer of vegetables. Sprinkle over 2 tbsp water.

4 Roast for 40-45 minutes, until chicken is cooked through and vegetables are cooked and lightly charred.

5 Crumble feta cheese on top (and chopped parsley if using). Serve with rice or vegetables.

Once cold the traybake can be portioned and frozen. Defrost portions overnight in the fridge. Reheat covered in foil in a moderate oven for about 20-30 minutes until piping hot, or covered in a microwave for about three minutes.

Got a favourite recipe to share? Send to editor@u3a.org.uk



STYLING AND PHOTOGRAPHY: MARKSETCHFIELD.COM