

# FOOD & DINING

## Get your Indian food feet wet with a simple dish

Indian cuisine is known for its unique flavor, which is often a byproduct of the many spices used in popular Indian dishes. Foodies who want to try their hands at preparing Indian food may find the following recipe for "Chicken, Red Lentils and Green Beans in One Pot" from Madhur Jaffrey's "Quick & Easy Indian Cooking" (Chronicle Books) is a simple, easily prepared dish, in spite of its extensive ingredient list.

### Chicken, Red Lentils and Green Beans in One Pot

Serves 4 to 6

- 6 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 3 bay leaves
- 5 whole cloves
- 6 cardamom pods
- 1 2-inch stick cinnamon
- 3 dried hot red chiles

- 2 pounds chicken pieces, skinned and cut into smaller serving portions (a pair of breasts into 4 to 6 pieces each and whole legs into 2 to 3 pieces each)
- 1 2/3 cups red lentils (masoor dal), picked over, washed and drained
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 2 teaspoons salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons store-bought garam masala
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 6 ounces green beans, trimmed and cut into 1-inch lengths
- Generous pinch of asafetida (see below), optional
- 1 1/2 teaspoons cumin seeds
- 1 small onion (about 4 ounces), peeled and cut into fine half rings
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, optional
- 12 cherry tomatoes, cut into halves crosswise, or 1 medium-sized tomato (about 5 ounces), diced



Put the 3 tablespoons of the oil into a wide, nonstick pan and set over high heat. When the oil is hot, put in the bay leaves, cloves, cardamom pods, cinnamon stick, and red chiles. Stir once or twice until the bay leaf starts to darken. Quickly put in the chicken pieces in a single layer and brown on both sides. Remove and spread out on a plate, leaving the oil and spices behind. Take the pan off the heat briefly and put into it the lentils, turmeric and 5 cups of water. Put the pan back on high heat and bring to a simmer. Cover partially and cook gently for 20 minutes. Meanwhile, sprinkle 1/2 teaspoon of the salt, lots of black pepper, 1/2 teaspoon of the garam masala, and the lemon juice on both sides of the chicken pieces. Rub in and set aside. When the lentils have cooked for 20 minutes, put in the chicken and all its accumulated juices, the green beans and 1 1/2 teaspoons salt. Stir and bring to a simmer. Cover, turn the heat to low and cook gently for another 20 minutes, stirring now and then.

Two minutes before the chicken and lentils are cooked, put the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil in a medium-sized frying pan and set over high heat. When the oil is hot, put in the asafetida (if using) and, a second later, the cumin seeds. Ten seconds later, put in the onion. Stir and fry until the onion turns brown at the edges. Put in the garlic. Stir and fry until the onion has turned fairly brown. Add the ground cumin, the ground coriander, 1 teaspoon garam masala, and the cayenne

if you want the dish to be hot. Stir once. Then put in the tomatoes, stir for 20 seconds, and pour this entire mixture into the pan with the chicken and lentils. Stir to mix.

Asafetida: A brownish resin of strong odor, asafetida is used to give a special kick to Indian foods. Even though used in small quantities, it subtly transforms the taste of a dish. It also happens to be a digestive. The ground variety is easy to use.

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