

Mattar Paneer

Paneer is a traditional Indian dairy ingredient made from fresh whole milk. One hundred percent vegetarian, paneer is a good meat substitute, taking on the flavours that it is cooked with. It has a fresh quality and a dense, crumbly texture that goes beautifully with strong flavours, such as the masala sauce combining peas in this recipe. Paneer, along with the spices listed in this recipe should be available from an Indian grocer or large supermarket.

Serves 4-6 as a main course, 8 as a side dish

Ingredients

2 packs paneer (approx 500g)

1 small bag petit pois defrosted

3 medium onions chopped

4 medium tomatoes chopped

1 tbsp tomato puree

1 fat clove garlic

3cm ginger, peeled

1-2 birds eye green chillies (depending on how hot you like your curry!)

2 heaped tsp cumin seeds

2 cinnamon sticks

6 cloves

1 tsp hing/asafoetida (optional)

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp garam masala

1 tsp salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp chilli powder

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp turmeric

Heaped tsp coriander and cumin powder (known as dhana jeera, usually at a ratio of 4:1 coriander:cumin. Substitute by mixing your own if unavailable).

4 tbsp sunflower oil/ghee (for sauce)

4 tbsp sunflower oil (for shallow frying the paneer)

Fresh coriander, chopped

Method

- Using a food processor or pestle and mortar, blitz the garlic, ginger and fresh chillies.
- Heat the oil until very hot, then add the cumin seeds, cinnamon sticks, cloves, hing and onions. Fry until the onion turns brown and the edges, being careful it does not burn.
- Reduce the heat a little and add the garlic, ginger and chilli mix. Continue to fry until toasted, making sure not to burn the garlic and ginger.
- Stir in the garam masala then add the tomatoes and tomato puree.
- Add the salt, chilli powder, turmeric and cumin and coriander powder. Simmer until the tomatoes are cooked and the oil rises around the edge of the mixture (about 10-15 minutes).
- Soak the paneer in warm water for 3mins, remove and dry on kitchen paper.
- Shallow fry the paneer using the additional sunflower oil in batches, until brown at the edges. Remove and drain on kitchen paper.

- Add the paneer to the masala sauce, stir and add the peas. Cover and simmer for 20 mins to reduce the sauce.
- Garnish with fresh coriander

Serve with rice, chapati or naan bread or as an accompaniment to other curries.

Recommended equipment

- Stella 6000 Hard Anodised 30 cm Saute Pan
- Alligator Onion Chopper
- Nigella Lawson's Living Kitchen Measuring Spoons Set - Stainless Steel OR Magnetic Measuring Spoons Set - Progressive
- Joseph Joseph Index Chopping Boards XY