



STORY OF LIMY, INDIAN NURSE IN PRAGUE



I AM LIMY JOSEPH, I AM AN INDIAN NURSE LIVING AND WORKING IN PRAGUE SINCE 3.5 YEARS. WHAT MADE ME TO COME TO PRAGUE WAS THE EXCEPTIONAL MULTI-CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT. THOUGH IT IS SMALL IN SIZE ITS BEAUTY IS WHAT ATTRACTED ME THE MOST. AMONG OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

CZECH REPUBLIC IS THE BEST OPTION FOR A QUALITATIVE LIFE STYLE WITH A LOWER COST OF LIVING.

I should say I am blessed to be in Prague where the famous church of Infant Jesus is situated. I am a huge devotee of Him. I am also fortunate enough to become a voice talent for Malayalam language in an American company in Prague. I enjoy cooking especially if it's my experiment. I am also a "foodie" who enjoys each bit of my food and also very intolerant when it comes to food waste. I was born in southern Indian state of Kerala which is known for its rich and secular culture and scenic beauty among other things. Kerala is blessed with lush forests, scenic backwaters and enchanting beaches with a wide range of mouth-watering cuisine. It has a considerable chunk of its population spread out all over the world thanks to early migration trend and leads the nation and sometimes surpasses few developed countries in its health and educational achievements. The warm welcoming nature of the people traces its history back to hundreds of years, Vasco da Gama being the first to visit from Europe.



INGREDIENTS (SERVES 4)

To pressure cook

1. Kadala / Black Chickpeas / Kala chana – 1.5 cup dried (Soak the dried chana in enough water for at least 8 hrs.)
Onion – 1/2 large, chopped or sliced and halved

Green chilies – 2, slit
Curry leaves – 1 sprig
Turmeric powder – 1/2 tsp
Pepper powder – 1/2 tsp
Fennel powder – 1/2 tsp
Salt – To taste
Water – As required

2. Oil – 1 tbsp
Mustard seeds – 1/2 tsp
Dry red chilies – 2
Curry leaves – 1 sprig
Coconut flakes / thenga kothu – 2 tbsp

3. Chilly powder – 1/4–1/2 tsp
Coriander powder – 1.5 tsp
Garam masala powder – 1/2–3/4 tsp

1. Pressure cook the ingredients numbered 1 adding enough water for 5 whistles. Open when the pressure releases. Set aside 3 tbsp of the cooked kadala to cool.

2. Heat oil in a small pan. Splutter mustard seeds and fry dry red chilies. Add curry leaves and thenga kothu/ coconut flakes. Saute until coconut flakes turn light brown. Switch off the stove. Add coriander powder, chilly powder and garam masala powder. Saute until the raw smell of the powders is gone. Add it to the the pressure-cooked kadala. Meanwhile grind 2–3 tbsp cooked, cooled kadala in a mixer. Add it to the pressure cooker. (This step is done to make the gravy thick). Bring the curry to a boil. Cook for 4–5 minutes on low flame. The gravy should have a thick consistency. It tastes best that way. Switch off. Serve hot with puttu / idiyappam / appam / chapatis etc. This is a very easy and tasty kadala curry.





INGREDIENTS (SERVES 2-3)

1. Prawns – 20-22
2. Turmeric powder – 1/4 tsp
Chilly powder – 1/4-1/2 tsp
Pepper powder – 1/8 tsp
Salt – To taste
Lemon juice – 1/2 tsp

Marinate prawns with the above ingredients numbered 2 for at least 15 minutes. Shallow fry in 2 tsp oil for 2 minutes on each side or until prawns are half-done.

3. Basmati rice – 1.5 cups
4. Oil – 1 tbsp
5. Whole spices – Cardamom – 2, whole pepper corns – 4, cinnamon stick – 1/2 inch, cloves – 5
6. Cashews – 2 tbsp
7. Onion – 1/2 medium, thinly sliced and halved
Ginger-garlic paste – 1.5 tsp
Green chilly – 1, slit
8. Turmeric powder – 2 pinches
Chilly powder – 1/4 tsp
Coriander powder – 1/2 tsp
Garam masala powder – 1/4-1/2 tsp
9. Mint leaves – 20-25 or 1/2 cup, chopped
(Set aside 2 tbsp to garnish)
Cilantro – 2-3 tbsp, chopped
10. Hot water – 2 cups
11. Medium-thick coconut milk – 1/2 cup
12. Salt To taste

1. Soak basmati rice for 20 minutes in enough water. Drain and set aside.

2. Heat 1 tbsp oil in a pressure cooker (I used a 5 liter pressure cooker). Add whole spices and stir until fragrant. Add cashews and stir until golden. Next add sliced onion, ginger-garlic paste and slit green chilly. Saute until onion turns transparent and raw smell of ginger-garlic paste leaves. Add spice powders numbered 8. Saute until their raw smell leaves. Add chopped mint leaves and cilantro. Saute for a minute

3. Add drained basmati rice. Mix well and stir everything for a minute. Add hot water and coconut milk. Mix well. Adjust

salt. Add in the half-cooked prawns. Mix gently. Close the pressure-cooker with its lid. Cook at medium heat until steam starts coming out. Place the weight on top and bring down the heat to medium-low. Cook for 3–4 minutes. Switch off. Open the pressure-cooker when pressure releases or after 10–15 minutes. Biryani will be perfectly done. Fluff rice with a fork, mix everything carefully and transfer to a serving bowl. Garnish with chopped mint and cilantro. This can be eaten on its own or you can enjoy it with raita, pickle and pappad. Its very easy, yummy and can be done in less than 45 minutes!

TIP

Coconut milk imparts a nice flavour to this biriyani. Instead of 2 cups water and 1/2 cup medium coconut milk, you can add 2.5 cup thin coconut milk.





INGREDIENTS (SERVES 5)

To marinate

1. Chicken – 3/4–1 kg, washed and cut to medium-sized pieces
Turmeric powder – 1/4 tsp
Pepper powder – 1/2 tsp
Garam masala powder – 1/2 tsp

(Click here for the recipe)

Salt – To taste

For the gravy

2. Coconut oil – 2–3 tbsp
Whole spices – (Fennels – 1/4 tsp, whole pepper corns – 1/4 tsp, cinnamon stick – 1 inch, bay leaf – 1, cloves – 5–6, cardamom – 2–3, star anise – 1)
3. Onion – 2 medium-sized or 1 large, thinly sliced
4. Green chilies – 3–5, slit
Ginger – 1–1.5 inch, thinly sliced (around 1.5 tbsp)
Garlic – 4 large cloves, chopped (around 1–1.5 tbsp)
Curry leaves – 1 sprig
5. Turmeric powder – 1/4 tsp
Coriander powder – 1–1.5 tbsp
Garam masala powder – 1/2 tsp
6. Tomato – 1 medium, chopped
7. Thin coconut milk – 1 cup (If you are using canned coconut milk, combine 3 tbsp with 1 cup water)
8. Pepper powder – 1/4–1/2 tsp
9. Garam masala powder – 1/8 tsp
10. Thick coconut milk – 1/4–1/2 cup (Mix 1/4 cup canned coconut milk with little water)
11. Salt – To taste

For seasoning

12. Coconut oil – 1–2 tsp
Pearl onions – 4–5, thinly sliced
Curry leaves – A few

1. Marinate the chicken pieces with 1/4 tsp turmeric powder, 1/2 tsp pepper powder, 1/2 tsp garam masala powder and enough salt for at least 30 minutes or overnight in the fridge.

2. Heat coconut oil in a deep pan / wok over medium heat and add the whole spices. Stir for a few seconds and add thinly sliced onion and little salt. Saute until the onions turns translucent and then add chopped ginger, garlic, green chilies and a few curry leaves. Stir for 2–3 minutes until onion starts to change color. Bring down the heat. Add the turmeric powder, coriander powder and 1/2 tsp garam masala powder. Stir for about 1–2 minutes or until their raw smell is gone and add chopped tomato. Saute for a minute and add the chicken pieces. Mix everything well and stir for 5–6 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add thin coconut milk. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Lower the heat to medium-low or low heat and cook the chicken until done, stirring 2–3 times in between. (It would take at least 30–40 minutes for the chicken to get cooked). Check for salt. Add 1/4 tsp garam masala powder, 1/8 tsp pepper powder, 1/2 cup thick coconut milk. Mix everything well. Taste check for salt. Switch off.

3. Heat 2–3 tsp coconut oil in a small pan. Fry the sliced pearl onions until golden brown. Add a few curry leaves and fry for a few seconds. Pour over the prepared chicken curry. Serve with appam / idiyappam / chapatis / bread.



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