

LAMB AND BEETROOT CURRY

DO PEEAZA CHUKANDAR

This is a very unusual curry, found mostly in Muslim homes in eastern and central India. The use of beetroot imparts a lovely colour and rich, earthy flavour. It's particularly good for a winter's evening, with Naan Bread or Layered Parathas.

SERVES 4

400g (14oz) raw beetroot
750g (1lb 10oz) boned leg of lamb, cut into 4cm (1 1/2-inch) cubes
5 tablespoons ghee
1 teaspoon cloves
4 black cardamom pods
3 onions, thinly sliced
2 teaspoons red chilli flakes
500ml (2 cups) water
1 teaspoon garam masala
1 red onion, sliced into rounds
4 sprigs of fresh coriander
juice of ½ lemon

For the marinade

150g (2/3 cup) plain yoghurt
1 tablespoon salt
1 ½ tablespoons red chilli powder
1 tablespoon ground coriander
2 tablespoons Ginger-Garlic Paste

Put the beetroot in a large pan, cover with plenty of water and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat, cover and simmer for about an hour, until the beetroot is tender and most of the water has evaporated. Whiz half the beetroot to a smooth paste in a food processor and cut the rest into 2.5cm (1-inch) cubes. Set aside.

Mix together all the ingredients for the marinade, add the meat and set aside for 20 minutes.

Heat 4 tablespoons of the ghee in a heavy-based pan, add the cloves and black cardamom pods and stir for 30 seconds. Add the sliced onions and fry until golden brown. Then add the marinated meat and cook over a high heat for 10 minutes, stirring constantly. Add the chilli flakes and cook for 2 minutes. Pour in the water, reduce the heat and simmer for 30–35 minutes. When the meat is almost cooked and little liquid remains, add the puréed and diced beetroot and cook for another 5 minutes or until the meat is tender. Stir in the garam masala and simmer over a low heat for a further 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, heat the remaining ghee in a frying pan, add the onion rings and sauté briefly for a minute or so. Remove from the heat and serve garnished with the coriander sprigs and onion rings and finished with a squeeze of lemon.

Cook's note

Adding 2 tablespoons of vinegar when boiling the beetroot gives a nice kick to the dish.