

# A DIFFERENT DAY A DIFFERENT DAL

A DAL OR LENTIL IS A PROTEIN PACKED PELLET AND A FUNDAMENTAL LIFE FORCE THAT FUELS MOST OF THE WORLD AND HAS DONE SINCE WE SINCE WE CAME DOWN FROM THE TREES AND OUT THE CAVES AND LEARNED HOW TO COOK THINGS.

A HUMBLE FOOD THAT IS CHEAP, EASY AND CAN BE QUICK TO COOK. ITS GOOD TO HAVE AT LEAST ONE DAL DISH UNDER YOUR BELT.

SYNONYMOUS WITH THE COOKING OF THE INDIAN SUB CONTINENT, MANY TYPES OF THERE ARE AND IN MANY FORMS- WHOLE, SKINNED, SPLIT OR POWDERED, THAT MAKE MANY PREPARATIONS SUCH AS BEING GROUND FLAVORED AND FRIED INTO SAVORY DUMPLINGS, MADE INTO FLOUR BASED BATTER THAT ARE FERMENTED AND USED IN SOUTH INDIAN STAPLES OF DOSA'S OR IDLI'S, TO THICKEN GRAVIES AND CHUTNI'S, SOAKED AND SPROUTED OR SOAKED AND FRIED INTO STAND ALONE SNACKS.

THE MOST COMMON USE THOUGH IS TO COOK WITH WATER AND SPICES TO A SOUPY PORRIDGE LIKE CONSISTENCY AND EATEN ALONG WITH RICE OR CHAPATI. A COMBINATION THAT PROVIDES A PERFECT PROTEIN VITAL TO THOSE WHO ARE NOT EATING MEAT.

MOST DO NOT NEED A SOAKING BUT A 20 MINUTE SOAK WILL REDUCE THE COOKING TIME, AS WILL A PINCH OF BICARBONATE OF SODA AS DOES A DROP OF OIL AND TURMERIC. SALT SLOWS DOWN RE-HYDRATION SO BEST ADD AT THE END.



## TO COOK DAL ITS EASY...

JUST BRING TO BOIL IN SOME WATER, TURN IT TO A SIMMER TILL THEY ARE SOFT. THE LONGER YOU COOK THEM THE MORE THEY LOOSE THEIR INDIVIDUAL SHAPE UNTIL THE LIQUID TURNS SOUP LIKE. THE CONSISTENCY IS UP TO YOU. GENERALLY THEY ARE THINNER IF SERVED WITH RICE AND THICKER IF TAKEN WITH CHAPATI. IF ITS TOO THICK ADD WATER, TOO THIN BOIL TILL ALONE, COOKED DAL IS BLAND. IT PROVIDES THE BULK THAT IS READY TO ABSORB FLAVORS AND WITH SIMPLE ATTENTION DAL IS A THING OF BEAUTY THAT IMPROVES THE WORKINGS OF THE BODY AND THE MIND. ITS GOODNESS GIVES MUSCLE TO THE BONES.

TASTES CAN BE ADDED

AT THE BEGINNING BY COOKING SOME AROMATICS WITH SOME SPICES IN SOME OIL TO GET THEM GOING AND FLAVOR THE OIL THEN ADD TO THE DAL, IN THE MIDDLE, BY PUTTING IN POWDERED SPICES AND VEGETABLES, OR AT THE END WITH THE TARKA METHOD, OR WITH A BIT OF EACH.

THE ONLY RULES ARE THE ONES YOU CHOOSE TO MAKE. DALS ABSORB MUCH MORE THAN FLAVOR. GIVE IT YOUR ATTENTION IT WILL GIVE YOU BACK MORE.



# MOONG DAL



# MUNG BEAN



WHOLE THE MUNG BEAN IS GREEN SKINNED AND SPROUTED. THE YELLOW SPLIT MUNG THOUGH IS BEST FOR DAL AND MOST COMMON IN INDIA EASY TO USE, EASY TO ABSORB AND A SUBTLE NUTTY TASTE. ITS OFTEN ALSO USED IN KHICHDI, THE STAPLE PREPARATION OF RICE AND DAL THAT KEEPS INDIA RUNNING.

IN KOLKATA THEY HAVE IT THIN AND SOUPY AND TEMPERED WITH MUSTARD, CUMIN, NIGELLA, CHILI AND PATA. POURED OVER RICE AND MIXED IN WITH THE FINGERS. THE START OF THE LUNCH , THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD.

IN THE LATE AFTERNOON SPARTAN WOODEN TOPPED TROLLEYS ARE ROLLED OUT. THERES A BOWL OF PASTED SPLIT MUNG FLECKED GREEN WITH CHILLI AND A COAL BUCKET SET IN THE MIDDLE TO FRY NUGGETS OF THE PASTE TILL GOLDEN CRISP BUT SOFT INSIDE. 7 IN A BAG, SOME SALTY MASALA AND PIPING HOT.



# MASOOR DAL-SPLIT RED LENTIL

**FOR 4**

1 SPOON MUSTARD OIL  
1/2 SPOON PANCH PARON  
10 SPOON MASOOR DAL  
1/8 SPOON TURMERIC  
1/8 SPOON SALT  
1 LTR WATER

HEAT THE MUSTARD OIL TILL SMOKING.  
TURN HEAT DOWN AND ADD PANCH PARON.  
IT WILL POP AND SPUTTER.  
ADD MASOOR DAL. STIR.  
THEN TURMERIC, SALT AND THE WATER.  
STIR IT AND KEEP AN EYE.  
WHEN IT BOILS FOAM RISES. SKIM IT  
AND STIR IT AND SKIM IT AGAIN.  
COVER AND LET IT SIMMER FOR  
MAYBE 30 MINUTES. BREAK IT DOWN  
WITH THE BACK OF A SPOON OR DAL  
STIRRER TILL AS YOU LIKE.

SMALL, FAST AND ACCOMMODATING AND EVERYWHERE.  
EASY TO COOK EASY TO ABSORB. NEEDS NO SOAKING  
AND WILL BE DONE UNDER HALF AN HOUR.

## TO SERVE

TOP HOT DAL  
WITH ANYONE.

CHAAT MASALA  
BOMBAY ONION CHOPPED  
GINGER SLICES  
TOMATO CHOPPED  
LIME SQUEEZE  
COCONUT SLICE  
TAMARIND SAUCE  
CORIANDER  
SEV

PANCH PARON IS BENGALI 5 SPICE.  
PANCH - 5. PARON - SPICE.  
CUMIN, MUSTARD, NIGELLA, FENUGREEK, FENNEL.  
ALL IN EQUAL MEASURE.



**TARKA OR TEMPURING...** IS BASICALLY FLAVORING THE DAL WITH FLAVORED OIL.

HEAT A LITTLE OIL - MUSTARD OIL IF YOU CAN, IN A SMALL PAN OR BIG SPOON SO THE OIL HOT AND ABOUT TO SMOKE. TEST BY ADDING A SINGLE MUSTARD SEED AND IF IT RAZZLE DAZZLE ITS READY.

START WITH THE MUSTARD SEEDS TILL THEY CRACKLE THEN THE CUMIN THEN THE REST.

RED CHILLI, INDIAN BAY, CURRY LEAF, CARDAMOM, FENUGREEK, FENNEL, BLACK PEPPER, CINNAMON, CLOVE. ALL POSSIBLE, ASAFOETIDA POWDER TOO.

IT MOVES FAST AND READY IN SECONDS WHEN THE COLORS HAVE DARKENED WITH AROMA'S RISING. POUR INTO THE POT AND IT WILL SPLUTTER WHEN YOU STIR WELL IN THE DAL THEN COVER WITH A LID.

ADDING FLAVOR THROUGH THE HOT OIL WORKS ON MANY THINGS PASTA, RICE, POTATO, LEFT OVERS AND VEGETABLES TOO, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ALSO ARE HOT WITH PORES OPEN AND READY TO RECEIVE.



THERE IS A DISH CALLED GHUGNI POPULAR IN KOKLATA.

IT IS ACTUALLY MADE WITH DRIED PEAS BUT WHAT HAPPENS IS AT THE END THEY SEASON IT WITH CHAAT MASALA, CHOPPED ONION, GINGER SLIVERS, COCONUT PIECES, TOMATO, FRESH CORIANDER, SQUEEZED LIME, TAMARIND SAUCE AND SEV. TAKE A LEAF OUT OF THE GHUGNI BOOK AND A BOWL OF DAL GOES INTO THE NEXT LEVEL.