

Simple Lentil Dal (Dahl)

Prep Time: 20 mins Total Time: 1 hr 5 mins
Servings: 6

About This Recipe "Don't let the word "Simple" fool you; it's a fairly easy recipe to make, but results in the loveliest of flavor complexities. The mashed garlic, cloves and cinnamon give the lentils a lovely, warm aftertaste and a heavenly fragrance. Whole spices are cooked in a bit of oil to infuse it with their flavor before the lentils are added and a fresh tempering oil is also used to finish the dish. This can be a of a stew-like consistency or like a soup depending on your preference. Add more water to thin, less to thicken. Puree a bit of the lentils for a smoother dal. Really nice over basmati rice! This was my second attempt at making a dal and my first "successful" one. :) The recipe, (courtesy of acclaimed chef and cooking teacher, Suvir Saran), calls for pink lentils (dhuli masoor dal), but I used split yellow (mung or moong without the hulls and split)."

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1 inch piece cinnamon stick
- 1 teaspoon cumin seed
- 3 whole cloves
- 4 green cardamom pods
- 1 cup lentils (picked over, washed and drained) or 1 cup pink lentils (picked over, washed and drained) or 1 cup yellow split lentils (picked over, washed and drained)
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 4 cups cold water
- 1 teaspoon salt, to taste
- Tempering Oil
- 1 tablespoon canola oil (I used ghee, clarified butter)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves (mashed to a paste, about 1/2 tablespoon)
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger
- 1 fresh hot green chili pepper, minced (I used a tablespoon of roasted jalapeno, minced-not as hot)
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 1/2 lemons, juice of or 1/2 lime, juice of, plus more to taste

Directions

1. Heat the oil with the cinnamon stick in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring, until the cinnamon unfurls, 1 to 2 minutes.
2. Add the cumin, cloves and cardamom and cook, stirring, until the cumin turns a golden brown color, about 1 more minute. Add the lentils, turmeric, water and salt. Bring to a boil and skim well. Turn down the heat and simmer, covered, until the lentils are soft, 20-30 minutes. Add more water during cooking if necessary. Taste for salt and add more if you need to.
3. Ladle about 1/2 cup of the lentils into a small bowl and mash them with a spoon (optional). Return the mashed lentils to the pot and give the dal a stir. Continue cooking at a simmer, uncovered, for 5 minutes to thicken. If you like a thicker dal, use a whisk to break up the lentils into a puree. If you like a thinner dal, add water. Remove the cinnamon stick (and cardamom pods, if you like).
4. For the tempering oil, heat the oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook until it just begins to brown around the edges, 4-5 minutes. Add the garlic paste, ginger and minced chile and cook just to mellow the raw taste of the garlic, 10-15 seconds.
5. Stir half of the tempering oil into the dal along with half of the cilantro and all of the lemon or lime juice. Simmer very gen-

tly for 5 minutes. Transfer the dal to a serving bowl, pour the remaining tempering oil over the top and sprinkle with the remaining cilantro. Serve hot with additional lemon or lime juice to taste.