

Source: <http://frugal-cooking.co.uk/>

Dhal Recipe with Tarka Topping

<i>Metric</i>	<i>Imperial</i>
You will need:	Half teaspoon of turmeric
Split mung beans (those orangey pink lentils in the supermarket in bags) about 8 oz	Couple of table spoons of sunflower oil OR largish knob of butter with a teaspoon of oil
Half an onion	3 or 4 dried red chillies
Half a lemon	Medium sized onion cut into fine slices/rings
2 bay leaves	Tablespoon of either mustard seeds or cumin seeds or fennel seeds
2 green chillies slit open	Largish pinch of ground asafoetida* (can miss this out if you don't like it or haven't got any)

METHOD

To make the dhal:

Pick over the lentils to make sure there are no little stones

Wash thoroughly, put in large saucepan with half onion, lemon, green chillies, turmeric and bay leaf and enough water to cover to a depth of 2 ins.

Bring to boil, skimming off any froth and throwing this away

Simmer partly covered for about 20 minutes, until lentils are soft enough to squash easily.

Take out all flavourings and discard.

Add salt.

While they are cooking make the tarka topping:

Heat up oil or oil/butter mix (the oil stops the butter burning) in frying pan

Add the dried chillies, asafoetida and seeds carefully as they will splutter.

Put in the finely sliced onion and cook until brown and crisp. Low/medium heat, don't stir too much

Pour contents of frying pan over the top of the lentils and serve immediately

Plain rice and green salad go really well with this, or any Indian bread like naans, or hot buttered toast.

Cooking rice

I have also put in our way of cooking rice, as it is foolproof and dead simple. You can cook it while the dhal is cooking.

1. Put three quarters of a cup of rice per person in a medium size saucepan and rinse until water runs clear. Don't mess about too much with it or starch is released and the rice will be sticky.

2. Put cold water in until it covers the rice to the depth of your first knuckle of your middle finger, half way up the knuckle.

3. Bring to the boil, cover and turn down heat to low and leave it alone for 18 to 20 minutes.

4. There should be no water left. Fluff up the rice and serve (if you leave the lid on the pan the rice will stay warm for about half an hour).

You can add cardamom seeds, bay leaf, lemon etc with the water, or salt if you like.

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