



Slow-Cooked Lamb with Fried Onions (Bhutuwa Massu)

Serves 6

This recipe for lamb bhutuwa uses an unusual technique. The meat is seared over high heat, then left to finish cooking very slowly with no added water until tender. This cooking method renders the flavor highly concentrated. I must admit I was dubious of this method, but it turned out beautifully. When the meat cooks with the lid on the pan, it steams a little, thereby creating some liquid in the pan to keep things moist.

Ingredients

2 pounds boneless leg of lamb, cut into 2- to 2 ½" cubes
2 tsp. ground turmeric
2 tsp. salt
2" piece fresh ginger, peeled and coarsely chopped (about ¼ cup)
4 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped (about 2 tbsp.)
2 jalapeno chiles, coarsely chopped, remove seeds for less heat
6 tbsp. vegetable oil
1 tbsp. ground coriander
1 tbsp. ground cumin
1 red onion, cut in half and sliced

Directions

Begin by seasoning the meat with turmeric and salt and let stand for 30 minutes while you prepare the rest of the ingredients.

Take the garlic, ginger, and chile that you've already chopped and put them in a mini food processor, or you can also use a mortar and pestle. Process/pound the ingredients further until you have a paste and then add to the meat, along with ¼ cup oil, coriander, and cumin. Mix well and let the meat marinate for 2 – 4 hours.

Heat the remaining oil in a Dutch oven or a large sauté pan over medium heat. Add the lamb cubes and brown on all sides, for a total of 8 – 10 minutes. Turn the heat as low as possible and cover with a lid. Continue cooking and stir occasionally until the meat has reached the desired tenderness, about 35 more minutes. When the meat is tender, remove the lid from the pan and continue to sauté the meat, stirring as needed, in order to let any

remaining liquid evaporate from the meat, leaving only the oil left in the pan. Remove the meat at this point to a platter and keep warm.

Using the same pan, add the sliced red onions to the remaining oil. If necessary, you can add more oil. Cook the onions until they soften and brown, but still retain some texture, 5 – 10 minutes. Add a splash of water at the very end to release all the delicious residue from the pan into the onions.

Top the meat with the fried onions, and serve with Tomato Achar and basmati rice.

Adapted from: Return to the Rivers: Recipes and Memories of the Himalayan River Valleys, by Vikas Khanna.

Photo credit: Linda McElroy



Eggplant Bhutuwa

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients

- 5 cups eggplant, unpeeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup oil
- 5 small dried whole chilies, like Chile de Arbol, or substitute red chile flakes
- 1 tsp. cumin seeds
- 2 cups potatoes, sliced
- 1 tsp. turmeric
- 1 tbsp. garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. ginger, minced
- 1 tbsp. fresh red chiles, minced
- 1 cup broth or water
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup green onion, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 tbsp. chopped cilantro for garnish

Directions

In a large pot of salted boiling water, blanch eggplant for a couple of minutes and transfer to an ice bath. When the eggplant has chilled, drain the water and lay the cubes out onto a paper towel lined tray to dry.

In non-stick sauté pan or wok, heat oil and fry dried whole chilies and cumin until dark.

Add potato slices and turmeric, stir-fry until potatoes are well-browned and cooked half way.

Add garlic, ginger, and chilies. Mix well to incorporate into the potatoes. Add blanched eggplant, broth and salt and pepper; stir fry for 5 – 7 minutes over medium-low heat until potatoes and eggplant are tender. Add diced tomatoes and green onions just before removing from heat. Garnish with chopped cilantro. Serve hot with basmati rice topped with Roasted Tomato Achar.

Adapted from and photo credit:

<http://whatscookinginyourworld.blogspot.com/2011/04/day-122-nepal-eggplant-bhutuwa-with.html>



Roasted Tomato Achar (Tested)

Makes 2 cups

- 1 ½ pounds ripe tomatoes, about 4-5
- 1 tbsp. oil
- 1 tsp. cumin seeds
- 1 tbsp. black or brown mustard seeds
- 1 fresh hot red chili, minced
- 1 tbsp. garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp. ginger, minced
- 1 tsp. coriander
- 2 tbsp. lime juice
- 2 tbsp. cilantro, sliced
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, or to taste

Garnish

1 tbsp. oil
5 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
2 tbsp. chopped green onions

Preheat oven to 425 F

Cut tomatoes in half and place cut side down on cookie sheet. Brush lightly with olive oil and roast in the oven for 30 minutes, or until skin is charred.

Remove charred skin and reserve flesh in a bowl. My tomatoes were completely soft and all that was required to break them down was to crush them with my hands. If yours are still a bit too firm, you may want to chop fine with a knife or buzz in the food processor.

In a sauté pan, heat oil. Add cumin and mustard seeds, fry for 30 seconds. Add minced chiles, garlic, and ginger and fry for another minute. Stir these spices into the crushed tomatoes, along with the coriander, lime juice, cilantro and salt. Mix well and rest for at least two hours before serving.

For garnish, in a non-stick pan, heat one tablespoon of oil and sauté slices of garlic until light brown. Pour the garlic-oil mixture and chopped green onion over tomato mixture just before serving.

Adapted from and photo credit:

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Nepalese Sweetened Yogurt (Sikarni) (Tested) **Serves 8 to 10**

Ingredients

3 cups plain, whole milk Greek yogurt
1 cup sour cream
3/4 cups sugar
1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
1/8 tsp. freshly grated nutmeg

freshly ground black pepper, about 1/8 tsp.
5 green cardamom pods, crushed, seeds removed and saved
pomegranate seeds
chopped pistachios

Directions

Put the yogurt into a bowl and add the sour cream, sugar, spices and cardamom seeds. Beat until light and creamy. Place in the refrigerator overnight to firm up a bit. Serve chilled in your prettiest glasses, garnished with chopped pistachios and pomegranate seeds.

Just for fun, I've included a two-minute video on how to seed a pomegranate. Using fresh seeds is so much better than purchasing those tubs of seeds from the market. This method was new to me, so I thought I would share with you all, plus, he's kind of adorable!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oyTRkUTtgc>

Recipe adapted from: <http://nepalicooking.tripod.com/dessert.htm#Sikarni>

Photo credit: Linda McElroy



Customs and Cuisine Nepal 2015

The Nepali cuisine, also known as the cuisine of the Himalayas, bears its uniqueness by incorporating the two great culinary traditions of the region, Indian and Tibetan, into a mainstream culinary culture of its own, which reflects the geographic and demographic diversity of the Himalayas.

The Nepali staples consist primarily of rice, wheat, corn and lentils, in addition to fresh vegetables and meats. A typical Nepali everyday meal can be characterized by *Dal* (lentil soups), *Bhat* (steamed rice), and *Tarkari* (vegetable preparations), also known as "The Trinity," supplemented by some meat preparation. A typical full course Nepali meal would include an appetizer, a vegetable or lentil soup, two or more vegetable and meat preparations, and an achar or chutney, served with roti (flat wheat bread), steamed rice or rice pilaf, supplemented with a local beverage, such as yogurt drink (lassi), beer or liquor,

and followed by a dessert and tea. One of the most popular fast foods, widely sold on the street, is momo, a type of steamed dumpling with meat or vegetable filling, which has become a traditional delicacy in Nepal.

Commonly used flavoring ingredients are garlic, ginger, cumin, coriander, turmeric, nutmeg, bay leaves, black pepper, chilies, onions, cilantro and scallions. Also, distinct Himalayan flavors are derived from the use of such unique spices as *Timur* (Szechwan pepper, commonly used in marinades and achars) and *Jimbu* (Himalayan herb, used fresh or dry), found only in the Himalayas. In addition, most dishes are flavored with mustard oil, clarified butter (ghee) and sometimes Yak butter.

Mustard oil is the staple cooking oil in most of Nepal, Bengal and Bangladesh, and is sold in South Asian groceries, with the bottles often marked “not for human consumption.” It’s been said that this is a way of avoiding the labeling and testing that would be mandatory if it were imported as a food product (mustard oil can also be used as a liniment). If you can’t find it, you can try using another oil together with 1 teaspoon mustard powder to get some mustard heat and flavor.

The standard fresh red or green chili usually called for in recipes is the cayenne chili—shiny, long, slightly curved and pointed. If you take out the seeds and membranes there’s much less heat. You can substitute the same number of serranos, for the same heat, or use jalapenos, which are milder and have a different taste.

Source materials: “Mangoes and Curry Leaves,” by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid

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