

# Curry Base

All my curries and most of the vegetable dishes use at least some of this Curry Base.

Try and make the Curry Base well in advance of cooking your meal. Although you can make the Curry Base, pre-cook the meat and then make the curry without a break it is less stressful if the Curry Base is already made. If you are cooking vegetable bhajis as well it is vital to have the Curry Base to hand or else you are going to be trying to do everything at the same time.

One batch of Curry Base will make up to 3 curries. If you need more Curry Base than the 600ml that the recipe produces then double up the amounts in the recipe but remember to use a 24cm heavy bottomed pan instead of a 20cm pan. If you need more than twice the amount then make double portions of the Curry Base in separate batches.

The recipe does not scale up well beyond being doubled. That is because it is **not** a scaled down version of the restaurant equivalent but rather a method I have devised to make restaurant-style curries in a domestic kitchen.

## ingredients

3 × 15ml spoons groundnut oil  
350 gm onions (trimmed weight) chopped into fairly small pieces  
3 medium sized cloves garlic, peeled and thinly sliced  
fresh ginger – 2 circular slices, 2mm thick, 15mm diameter, skinned  
250ml + 125 ml water  
1 × 15ml spoon tomato paste (concentrated tomato purée)  
1 × 2.5ml spoon ground cumin  
1 × 2.5ml spoon ground coriander  
1 × 2.5ml spoon turmeric  
salt  
3 grinds black pepper

## method

1. Heat the oil in a 20cm heavy-bottomed pan over a medium/high heat
2. Add the chopped onions and stir-fry for 3 minutes or until the onions have lost plenty of moisture and have reduced in volume in the pan. Add the garlic and ginger slices to the pan. Stir-fry for another 1 minute.

3. Turn the heat down to minimum and gently sweat the mixture for a further 6 minutes, stirring occasionally, making sure nothing browns or burns.
4. Remove the pan from the heat and let cool a little.
5. Pour 250ml water into an electric blender and add the onion mixture being sure to scrape out the pan to capture all the bits of onion, garlic and ginger.
6. Give the blender a couple of quick pulses to start with then blend for a little longer until the mixture no longer has discernable pieces of onion. Don't blend the mixture down to an ultra-smooth purée. You are aiming for a grainy texture not unlike a thick soup.
7. Pour the contents of the blender back into the same pan (don't bother to wash it out). Add 100ml water to the blender and whiz to get all the remaining sauce out of the blender. Add this watery mixture to the pan too. Stir to mix.
8. Add the tomato paste, cumin, coriander, turmeric, salt and pepper and stir to incorporate them into the mixture. The Curry Base will have a pale, washed out colour at the moment but don't worry. As the sauce cooks it will darken to a deep golden brown.
9. Bring the Curry Base up to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes stirring from time to time. Stir any froth that gathers on top back into the sauce. You will probably have to lower the heat even further as the sauce thickens or else you will get volcanic eruptions of hot sauce spurting out of the pan. Very messy!
10. Pour off the Curry Base into a measuring jug. You should have about 600ml. If you have much more than 600ml then return the mixture to the pan and cook down a little further . If you have much less add water to make the volume up to 600ml
11. Set aside to use later as the base for your curries. Refrigerate the Curry Base once it has cooled to room temperature. It will keep for up to 3 days in the fridge.



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Curry Base  
[Index](#)