

Korai

Serves 2

Many Indian restaurants had a balti-style curry on their menu long before the rise in popularity of balti cooking in Britain. They did not call the curry a balti but rather a korai or karahi and many restaurants still include one on their menu.

The korai or karahi is a cooking pot like a Chinese wok except that it has two curved handles instead of one long one. So the name is really a style of stir-fry cooking. Because it is a style of cooking rather than a traditional recipe the restaurant versions do vary quite a bit.

Because the korai is a stir-fry you need to have all the ingredients prepared and ready before you start cooking. Otherwise, the dish will lose its lovely fresh taste because you've overcooked the curry while getting all the ingredients ready.

ingredients

1 batch of pre-cooked [chicken](#), pre-cooked [lamb](#), prawns or vegetarian option
5 spring onions – prepared as in method
½ green pepper – prepared as in method
2 medium tomatoes – prepared as in method
3 × 15ml spoons groundnut oil
2 pinches kalonji seed
1 black cardamom pod
1 piece cassia bark about 20mm x 7mm
1 × 2.5ml spoon grated ginger
8 × 15ml spoons [Curry Base](#)
1 × 5ml spoon ground cumin seed
1 × 5ml spoon ground coriander seed
1 × 2.5ml spoon *hot* chilli powder
1 × 2.5ml spoon lime juice
3 grinds black pepper
salt
1 × 15ml spoon finely chopped fresh coriander leaves and thin stalks
[Curry Stock](#) or water to loosen the curry

special equipment

a large karahi or wok
2 small karahi or balti pots for serving (optional)

method

1. Make the Curry Base.
2. Pre-cook the meat (if using).
3. Take 3 of the spring onions, trim off the roots, and slice the onions across into thin rings. Set aside to add to the curry later. Take the remaining 2 spring onions, trim off the roots, and slice at an angle so you get oval shaped pieces. Set aside on a separate plate to use as a garnish for the curry.
4. Cut the green pepper in half by cutting down through the stalk. Refrigerate the half you are not using. Cut the other half into 3 lengthwise. Remove any stalk, seeds and pith. Slice across the lengths to make strips about 3mm wide.
5. Put the tomatoes into a bowl and cover with boiling water. Leave for 3 minutes and then remove the tomatoes with tongs or a spoon and plunge them into plenty of cold water. When the tomatoes are comfortable to touch remove them from the cold water and pat dry with kitchen paper. Cut the tomatoes into quarters by cutting down through the stalk end. Take each quarter and gently peel off the skin and remove the pith and seeds. Now all you have left is 8 pieces of tomato flesh. Chop the flesh coarsely.
6. Pour the oil into a large karahi or wok and heat over a high heat.
7. Put the green pepper slices into the karahi and stir fry for about 30 seconds while the peppers sizzle away. Remove the pepper slices from the karahi with a slotted spoon draining off as much oil as possible back into the pan. Set them aside.
8. Slide the tomato pieces into the karahi and stir fry for about 30 seconds. Remove the tomato pieces from the karahi with a slotted spoon draining off as much oil as possible back into the pan. Set them aside.
9. Drop the kalonji seed, black cardamom pod and cassia bark into the pan. Wait for the cardamom pod to swell up a little then add the grated ginger and stir fry for 10 seconds or so.
10. Reduce the heat to medium and add 30ml Curry Base, the ground cumin, ground coriander and chilli powder and stir fry for 30 seconds.
11. Add another 30ml Curry Base and stir fry for 1 minute. Repeat the process until all the Curry Base is mixed in.
12. Add the lime juice and black pepper and stir to mix.
13. Bring the sauce to the boil and simmer gently for 10 minutes stirring from time to time.
14. If the curry gets too thick add a little Curry Stock or water to loosen the sauce. Wait until that liquid has gone before adding more but make sure the sauce is quite dry before adding the pre-cooked meat.
15. Now add the pre-cooked chicken or lamb (see below if you are using prawns or a vegetarian option) and all the juices that have collected in the bowl into the saucepan. Stir to coat the meat with sauce.
16. Cook for 7 minutes so the meat is completely heated through.
17. If you are making a prawn or vegetarian curry then cook the sauce for a further 7 minutes and then add the prawns or vegetarian option 3 minutes before the end of the cooking to heat through.

18. 3 minutes before the end of the cooking add the chopped coriander leaves, the fried green pepper slices, the fried tomato pieces and the spring onion rings. Stir to mix in.
19. Let the tomatoes transfer their moisture to the sauce before you decide to add any Curry Stock or water to loosen the curry. I don't usually need to add any extra liquid to this recipe.
20. Taste the curry and add salt and a little more lime juice if necessary.
21. If you are going to serve the curry in individual karahi or balti pots then pre-heat them in a medium oven.
22. Transfer the curry to the pre-heated karahi or a warmed serving dish and garnish with the ovals of spring onion.



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