

MASALA CHANNA

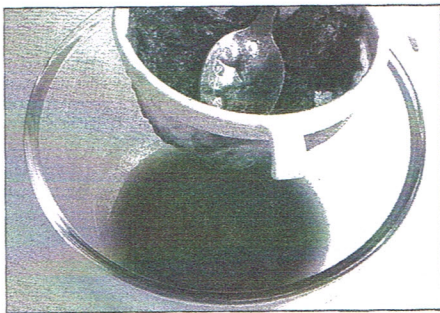
This is a typical Calcutta street food known as ghughni. Plates full of ghughni, with the wholesome taste of chickpeas laced with spices and tamarind juice, are enjoyed with flat breads such as chapatis and parathas.

SERVES 4

225g/8oz/1 ¼ cups dried chickpeas
 50g/2oz tamarind pulp
 120ml/4fl oz/½ cup boiling water
 45ml/3 tbsp vegetable oil
 2.5ml/½ tsp cumin seeds
 1 onion, finely chopped
 2 garlic cloves, crushed
 2.5cm/1in piece fresh root ginger, grated
 1 fresh green chilli, finely chopped
 5ml/1 tsp ground cumin
 5ml/1 tsp ground coriander
 1.5ml/¼ tsp ground turmeric
 2.5ml/½ tsp salt
 225g/8oz tomatoes, skinned and finely chopped
 2.5ml/½ tsp garam masala
 chopped chillies and chopped onion, to garnish

1 Put the chickpeas in a large bowl and cover with plenty of cold water. Leave to soak overnight.

2 Drain the chickpeas and place in a large pan with double the volume of cold water. Bring to the boil and boil vigorously for 10 minutes. Skim off any scum, then cover and simmer for 1½–2 hours or until soft.



3 Meanwhile, break up the tamarind pulp and soak in the boiling water for about 15 minutes. Use the back of a spoon to rub the tamarind through a sieve (strainer) into a bowl, discarding any stones and fibre. (Leave out this step if you are using commercial tamarind paste in place of the fresh pulp.)



4 Heat the vegetable oil in a wok, karahi or large pan and fry the cumin seeds for 2 minutes until they begin to splutter. Add the chopped onion, garlic, ginger and chilli and fry for 5 minutes.

5 Add the cumin, coriander, turmeric and salt and fry for 3–4 minutes. Add the tomatoes and tamarind juice. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes.

6 Add the chickpeas and garam masala, cover and simmer for about 15 minutes. Garnish with the chillies and onion.

COOK'S TIP

Make double the quantity of tamarind juice and freeze in ice-cube trays. It will keep for up to 12 months. Alternatively, buy tamarind paste sold in Indian stores. It is ready to use and will keep for an indefinite period at room temperature.

