

Recipes



Classic Nepali MOMO

(Nepali Meat Dumplings) *makes about 2 dozen*

Ingredients – Stuffing Mixture:

- 1 package wonton wrappers
(or gyoza wrappers 3" diameter)
- 2 lbs. ground lamb or pork
- 1 cup finely chopped red onion
- 1 tablespoon finely minced garlic*
- 1 tablespoon finely minced ginger*
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
(or Szechwan pepper if you have it)
- ¼ teaspoon nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon turmeric
- 1 tablespoon curry powder
- 3 fresh red chilies minced

salt to taste

3 tablespoons cooking oil

*Note: MOMO sauce (see below) calls for additional ginger and garlic -save time by chopping it all at once!

Directions:

For stuffing mixture combine all filling ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Cover and refrigerate for at least an hour to allow all ingredients to impart their unique flavors. This also improves the consistency of the filling.

Place about 1 tablespoon filling in the center of the wrapper. If using wonton wrappers very lightly wet the edges and pull up the four corners to meet in the middle. Press the middle top knot together, and press all four of the seams you have now created together, the seams will be on the outside, and your package will look like a little box. If using round wrappers place one wrapper in the palm of your hand, add one tablespoon of the filling and with the other hand bring all edges together to the center, while making pleats. Pinch and twist the pleats to ensure the absolute closure of the stuffed dumplings. ***Linda's note: I find using wonton wrappers much easier. These can also be made ahead of time and frozen, no need to defrost, just increase cooking time a bit.**

Heat up a steamer, oil the steamer rack well. This is critical because it will prevent dumplings from sticking. Arrange uncooked MOMOs in the steamer with some space left between the dumplings. Close lid and allow steaming until the dumplings are cooked through, about 10-15 minutes. **Alternatively**, you can place uncooked dumplings directly in lightly salted boiling water and cook until done, approximately 10 minutes. Serve with dipping sauce.

Sherpa MOMO Achar (Spicy Soy-Based Dipping Sauce for MOMOs)

2 tablespoons soy sauce, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 tablespoon mustard oil, 1 teaspoon finely chopped fresh ginger, 1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic, 1 tablespoon honey, 1 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper (or Szechwan pepper). Mix all ingredients together and serve with MOMOs.

Adapted from: Nepali Cooking - <http://nepalicooking.tripod.com/momo.htm>



Nepali Green Bean-Sesame Salad

Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients:

1 lb. green beans or yard-long beans
3 tablespoons sesame seeds
2 tablespoons peanut oil or vegetable oil
2 green cayenne chilies, seeded and sliced into rings
(or substitute Serrano or jalapeno peppers)
½ teaspoon salt
2 to 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

Directions:

Cook the beans in a large pot of boiling salted water until just tender and still slightly firm. Drain, rinse in cold water for a moment to cool them

down, and then cut on the diagonal into ½-inch lengths. Place into your serving bowl.

Heat a dry heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Add sesame seeds, lower heat to medium and dry roast, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, until lightly touched with gold and aromatic. Allow to cool then transfer to a spice/coffee grinder and grind to a coarse powder, set aside.

Heat the oil in the same skillet you used for the sesame seeds over medium-high heat. Toss in the chopped chiles and stir-fry for about 30 seconds. Pour the chilies and hot oil over the beans and toss. Sprinkle on the ground sesame seeds and salt to taste, toss. Add the lemon juice and toss.

Serve warm or at room temperature. If you wish, add chopped cilantro or mint to the salad just before dressing.

Recipe Source: Mangoes and Curry Leaves (<http://amzn.to/1eC11VY>) by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid



Spiced Indian Cabbage

Serves 6 to 8

In this Nepali stir-fry, cabbage cooks in a simple flavor paste of cooked onion, garlic and ginger.

Ingredients:

1 small head of cabbage, or half of a large head
2 teaspoon minced ginger
2 teaspoons minced garlic
½ teaspoon ground coriander
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
¼ teaspoon mustard seeds
1 cup thinly sliced onion
¼ teaspoon turmeric
½ teaspoon salt
½ cup water

Directions:

Quarter and core the cabbage. Cut into 2" dice.

In a small bowl mix together the ginger, garlic and ground coriander.

Heat a heavy skillet over medium-high heat, add oil, mustard seeds and stir. After about 20 seconds, add sliced onion and stir-fry until softened and starting to brown, about 5-7 minutes. Stir in the reserved flavor paste, add cabbage and sprinkle with salt. Stir-fry for a minute to expose all the surfaces to the hot pan, add water, bring to a boil and simmer for 2-3 minutes, covered. Remove the lid and finish simmering to cook away the water.

***Linda's note:** This recipe originally called for asparagus, but I've adapted it for cabbage since that is a better choice in March. But if asparagus is available in your area you may want to try it.

Adapted from: Mangoes and Curry Leaves (<http://amzn.to/1eC11VY>) by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid



Mountain Dal

Serves 4 to 6

In Nepal, rice and lentils rule. Dal bhat (rice and lentils) is eaten every day, several times a day, over and over!

Ingredients:

1 cup mung dal, washed and drained*
5 to 6 cups water
½ teaspoon turmeric
1 teaspoon salt

Tempering (balancing spices)

2 to 3 dried red chilies, stemmed
1 teaspoon coriander seeds
½ teaspoon cumin seeds

3 cloves
1-inch piece of cinnamon stick
Seeds from 2 green cardamom pods
5 or 6 black peppercorns
1 tablespoon mustard oil
1 cup finely chopped onions

*Split mung (yellow) dal, you can substitute red lentils which may be easier to find and will cook faster as well. If you use regular brown lentils you will need to cook them much longer in order to obtain the soupy consistency desired.

Directions:

Put dal into a large pot with 5 cups water and the turmeric and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to maintain a strong simmer, partially cover, and cook for 30-40 minutes, until the dal is almost mushy. For a more liquid texture add another ½ to 1 cup water. When the dal has finished cooking add the salt.

Meanwhile grind together the chilies, coriander, cumin, cloves, cinnamon, cardamom and pepper in a spice grinder. Set aside.

Heat a heavy skillet over medium-high heat and add the oil, then the chopped onions and stir-fry for 5 minutes. Add the ground spice blend and stir-fry for 1 to 2 more minutes, add to the pot of dal. Simmer 10 minutes to blend flavors, serve over bhat (steamed rice).

Recipe Source: Mangoes and Curry Leaves (<http://amzn.to/1eC11VY>) by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid



Sikarni

(Spiced Sweet Yogurt-Pistachio Dessert)

serves 10-12

Ingredients:

6 cups plain yogurt
2 cups sour cream
¼ cup double cream (or whipping cream)
2 cups sugar*
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg, fresh grated if possible
1 teaspoon saffron, crushed (optional)
1 cup unsalted, shelled pistachio nuts, chopped
(reserve some whole for garnish)

Directions:

In a large bowl mix yogurt and sour cream together. Pour the yogurt mixture into a large colander with a cheese cloth liner. Allow to drain for about 12 hours. Transfer the mixture into a mixing bowl. Dissolve saffron, if using, into the (lukewarm) cream. To the yogurt mixture add sugar*, all spices, dissolved saffron, and chopped pistachio nuts. Chill overnight. To serve, scoop chilled dessert onto a serving dish, topped with whole pistachios.

***Linda's Note:** Hmm, 2 cups of sugar sounds like an awful lot. Not having made this dish myself, I would start with just over a cup and add more to suit your taste. Otherwise, this dessert sounds delicious!

Recipe Source: Nepali Cooking <http://nepalicooking.tripod.com/dessert.htm#Sikarni>



Cuisine of Nepal

The Nepali cuisine marries the culinary traditions of India and Tibet to create a diet consisting primarily of *dal* (lentils), *bhat* (steamed rice) and *tarkari* (vegetable curry). Sometimes referred to as “The Trinity”, these three staples are sometimes supplemented by meats.

A traditional delicacy in Nepal, Momo is a steamed dumpling made in several different shapes and filled with meat and/or vegetables. Widely sold on the street, momo are one of the most popular fast foods.

Spices and flavorings commonly used in Nepali cuisine that are familiar to the western palate are ginger, cumin, coriander, turmeric, nutmeg, bay leaves, black pepper, chilies, onions, cilantro, and scallions. Some spices unique to the Himalayas are also used, such as *timur* (Szechwan pepper) and *jimbu* (an herb used fresh or dried but available only in the Himalayas). Clarified butter (ghee) is used often, and sometimes Yak butter flavors traditional Nepali cuisine.

Mustard oil is the staple cooking oil in most of Nepal and northern India. You can find it here in the US in Asian groceries. There is some debate about the safety of this oil, as the bottles are generally marked ‘Not for consumption’, though many people use it in cooking anyway. An alternate is to just add 1 teaspoon dry mustard powder to any other cooking oil. This will impart some of the traditional flavor.

Red or green chilies specified in Nepali recipes generally refer to cayenne peppers. They are less spicy if you remove the seeds before using. Serrano peppers can be substituted, and they are quite as hot as cayenne, or use jalapenos for a milder flavor.

A typical meal in Nepal will begin with an appetizer, followed by a soup course, and several vegetables and meats served with chutney. Flatbread (roti) is usually served along with the meal, and of course steamed or curried rice is provided.

Customs

More or less all Nepalese eat with their right hand, though urban eateries and some young urban youth have already embraced silverware. Food may be served in a metal plate divided into separate compartments called “Thal” or simple plate. Nepali food is eaten in a typical way. For example: Dal Bhat (lentils with rice) is eaten in following way – first, dal is poured over the rice if the dal came in a separate bowl. The mixture is separated in chunks with the fingers. Then a bit of Tarkari (vegetable curry) and/or Achar is added for each chunk. Everything is eaten together in a chunk with the right hand.

In most of Nepal, especially rice-growing areas, Dal Bhat is eaten twice a day. Generally, the first meal of the day is eaten from about 7:00 to 10:00 a.m. and the second shortly after sunset around 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. During weekends (Saturday), the first meal is eaten a little bit late. Snacks eaten between the two meals include bread, chura (beaten rice), roti (flat bread), curried vegetables, and milked tea.

Compiled by Linda McElroy

Sources:

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