

INDIAN GRAVIES AND BASIC PASTE

Curry as the word is used today in India, simply means a gravy. In the West gravy is a liquid sauce made with juice from the meat, thickened with flour and seasonings. Indian curry or gravy is made by cooking the meat or vegetables along with lots of ingredients including thickening agents and a combination of spices but using no flour.

GRAVY: It is a liquid or semi liquid mixture cooked along with meat or vegetables, lots of spices and mainly thickened and enriched with dry nuts .

Making a gravy // curry

The starting point in making a curry is to choose a cooking pot with a non reactive inner surface. Most curries have sour ingredients, so if a copper or brass pot were used it would have to have a tin lining. Stainless steel is better from the reactive point of view than the aluminum or enamel but the pot should have a thick base or the spices will stick while frying.

All curries have main ingredients such as meat, fowl, eggs, or a single vegetable like potatoes, brinjals, mushrooms, or a mixture of vegetables.

Most curries start with the heating of cooking fat. Traditionally Indians prefer to use ghee, which is clarified butter for imparting better flavour to the food.

- The basic art of making curry is involved in three stages
- The choice of spices
- The sequence in which the spices are put into.
- The ways the spices are used.

Classification of gravies // curries

Depending upon the final appearance of the product Indian gravies can be classified as follows:

Brown gravy:

By using brown onion paste made with sour curd.

By using brown onion paste made with tomato puree or pulp.

White gravy:

By using boiled onion paste.

By using finely chopped onion (lightly fried in ghee or oil to get golden tinge in the gravy.)

Green gravy: A typical Indian gravy made by using green paste which is the combination of spinach, coriander leaves, mint leaves and green chilies in the ratio of 2:1:1/4:1/8 (few nos. subject to the hotness of chilies).

Makhni gravy: It is one of the finest Indian gravies made out of tomatoes, butter, ginger, garlic, garam masala and finished with honey and double cream and flavoured with kassori methi.

Kadhai gravy: Traditionally this gravy is made in an iron kadhai and so is the name. It is made by using a group of Indian whole spices which are broiled and powdered (Khada masala).

BASIC INDIAN PASTE

Onion paste: It is used finely or coarsely chopped, sliced or pureed. The proportion of onions to the main ingredient of the gravy is important, because this will determine whether there is a sweet element in the taste as well as thickness of the gravy.

Boiled onion paste: Roughly cut onions are boiled in handi with bay leaves, cardamom and sufficient amount of water and simmered till the onion becomes transparent and the liquid has evaporated. Blend into a fine puree.

Brown onion paste: Fine slice of onions, golden fried in oil, spread over any absorbent material and cool. Blend into puree with either sour curd or tomato puree as per the recipe.

Ginger paste: Freshly chopped ginger made into fine past by using little water and can be stored in the refrigerator for 72 hrs.

Garlic paste: Freshly chopped garlic made into fine paste through a blender and can be stored in the refrigerator for at least 72 hrs.

Coconut paste: Finely grated coconut made into fine paste with little amount of water. Can be stored in refrigerator for at least 12 hrs.

North Indian white paste: A mixture of fine paste made with cashewnuts, charmagaj (the softest inner most part of the seeds from four vegetables e.g. water melon, cucumber, white pumkin and ash gourd), poppy seeds and copra (desiccated coconut).

Hydrabadi white paste: A mixture of fine paste made with chirangi, white til seeds, roasted peanuts, and milk of coconut.

Poppy seeds paste: Soak the poppy seeds in warm water for 30 minutes and drain and blend to a fine paste. Can be stored in refrigerator for 24 hrs.

SPICES USED MAINLY FOR TASTE

- Coriander seeds and coriander powder (Dhania)
- Turmeric (Haldi)
- Dried red chilli and chilli powder
- Cumin seeds (Jeera)
- Cinnamon and cloves (Dalchini and lavang)
- Pepper (Kali mirchi)
- Mustard (Rai or Sarson)
- Fenugreek(Methi)
- Fennel (Saunf)

SPICES USED MAINLY FOR AROMA

- Garam masala (Hot spices)
- Cinnamon leaf (Tej or Tuj patta)
- Large black cardamom (Barra elaichi)
- Green cardamom (Choti elaichi)
- Nutmeg (Jai phal)
- Mace (Javitri)
- Asafoetida (Hing)
- Star aniseed (Chakra phool)
- Saffron (Kesar)
- Rose petals (Gulab)
- Screw pine flower (Keora)

SOURING AGENTS

- Tomato

- Yoghurt
- Vinegar
- Tamarind
- Lime
- Cocum
- Raw mango (Amchoor)

THICKENING AGENTS

- Onions
- Yoghurt
- Cream (malai)
- Coconut milk
- Cashew nuts
- Almonds
- Peanuts
- White Til seeds (Sesame seeds)
- White poppy seeds
- Mustard seed
- Lentils

GIVING COLOUR TO A CURRY

- Turmeric: **Bright yellow**
- Saffron: **Pale apricot**
- Red chillies: **Reddish -brown**
- Kashmiri chilli: **Vermilion**
- Fresh Criander leaves: **Green**
- Red tomatoes: **Pinkish**
- Red tomatoes and Yoghurt combined: **Reddish**

- Golden fried onions: **Deep or dark brown**
- Coriander powder: **Deep brown**
- Garam masala powder: **Deep brown**

INDIAN MASALAS

Garam masala: It is the combination of aromatic spices mainly made with small cardamom, cinnamon stick, cloves and tej patta. The chefs always make their own mix. All the spices are roasted on a dry griddle and powdered. Preferably stored in

Khara masala: It is the combination of whole spices roasted and powdered e.g. cumin, coriander, red chilli dry, black pepper corn, small cardamom, cloves, cinnamon stick and mace.

COOKING MEDIUM USED

- Any variety of white oils
- Desi ghee or pure ghee
- Unsalted butter
- Mustard oil
- Coconut oil
- Sesame oil

Vegetable fat or Vanaspati



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