

MEATLESS MONDAY: SLOW COOKER SRI LANKAN INSPIRED SWEET POTATO & CHICKPEA CURRY

Serves: 6

Prep: 40 mins (*Dependent upon skill and/or kitchen helpers!)

Cooking: 7-8hrs (*Over a low heat setting)

Type: Main Meal

Tools: Small bowl, colander, chopping board, sharp knife, sieve, frying pan, measuring jug, slow cooker, non-stick pot.

Courtesy of: Eat2Health Blog



Curry prepared in a slow cooker (although not traditional!) is by far one of the best methods to develop a huge depth of healthy and aromatic flavours- well, that's our opinion anyways! Our Sri Lankan inspired curry has sweet and creamy potatoes (that melt in your mouth), combined with hearty and robust chickpeas and an abundance of delicious flavours. All served over a bed of fluffy rice! Yes, hearty, spicy and packed full of tasty and healthful ingredients; its plant-based eating that is designed to help make this more than a 'one day occasion'!

Ingredients:

3	Garlic Cloves (fat ones!)		Low-Fat Cooking Oil
240g	Banana Shallots	1g	Dried Fenugreek Leaves
20g	Green Chilli (we used a Serrano)	6-8g	Sri Lankan Spice Blend
100g	Fresh Ginger Root		Ground Black Pepper
200g	Red Bell Pepper	600ml	Vegetable Stock (low-salt/GF if required)
1	Stalk of Lemongrass	1	Tin Reduced Fat Coconut Milk
1	Lime	160g	Frozen Spinach
1 kg	Sweet Potato		Brown Basmati Rice (60-65g/Person. *optional)
470g	Cooked Chickpeas		

Directions:

1. Peel and dice the garlic and shallots. Wash the chilli, remove the stem, deseed (if you prefer meals with less heat!) and then finely chop it. Wash, peel and then dice the ginger. Wash, remove the stem and core and then chop the bell pepper into ½ cm pieces.
2. Wash the lemongrass, trim off the ends, peel away tough/ dried-out outer layer (and discard), bash the woody exterior with a rolling pin to soften and then finely chop it. **Tip:** *Bashing or firmly pressing the lemongrass will help release some of its aromatic oils.* Wash the lime, grate the zest (do not juice it just yet like we have shown here, you'll do this later on!).
3. Wash the sweet potatoes, peel and then chop into approx. 1" pieces (we kept ours chunky!)
4. Heat a non-stick frying pan over a medium-low heat. Spray it with some low-fat cooking oil. Add the garlic, shallot, chilli, ginger, bell pepper and lemongrass. Stir together. Gently fry for 2-3 mins or until softened. Add the sweet potato. Spray a little more cooking oil. Stir together. Gently fry for 3 mins. Add the lime zest, 1g fenugreek leaves and 6-8g Sri Lankan spice blend. Add a few grinds of black pepper. Stir together. Gently fry for 30 seconds or until fragrant. Remove from the heat.

5. In the meantime, prepare your stock according to the packet instructions.
6. Transfer the vegetable mixture into a slow cooker. Add the chickpeas and coconut milk. Stir together. Pour in the boiling hot stock. Stir together. Cover with a lid. Set to cook for 7-8 hrs over a low heat setting or over a high setting for 2-3.
7. Slightly defrost the spinach, chop it into smaller 'chunks'. Add it to the slow cooker 30 mins before the end of cooking. *Tip: If you're using fresh leaves, roughly chop and then stir them through the curry once it has finished cooking. Let it stand (covered) for about 5 mins to allow the leaves to slightly wilt.*
8. Prepare the rice according to the packet instructions (if applicable).
9. Juice the lime. Stir the juice through the curry just before serving.
10. Spoon the rice into large serving bowls (If applicable). Ladle over the curry. Garnish with a wedge of lime, a small dollop of sweet & sour lime pickle or some fresh coriander leaves.

Enjoy!

Notes:

- Use about 2 tins of chickpeas or 260g of a dried/cooked variety
- Our Sri Lankan Spice Blend: Coriander Seeds, Whole, Fenugreek Seeds, Whole, Cumin Seeds White, Whole, Fennel Seeds, Whole, Cayenne Chillies, Ground, Cinnamon Bark, Whole, Cardamom Green, Whole Pods, Curry Leaves, Whole Clove Buds 'Hand-Select'
- If you are not keen on sweet potato, try adapting it with cauliflower, butternut squash or aubergine; just remember to adapt the other flavours as you see fit.
- We have used some reduced fat coconut milk, but still be mindful as there still is a moderate quantity of fat per serving; 'reduced fat' foods are not free passes to eat more!
- Refrigerate any leftover curry in an air-tight and resealable container; reheat and consume within 3-4 days. Alternatively, store and freeze in an air-tight and resealable container(s); defrost, reheat and consume within 2 months.