



Najee's Afghan Recipes

MANTU AND ASHAK

Steamed meat dumplings and steamed leek dumplings

These dumplings are very popular in Afghanistan and are served at weddings, family parties and get-togethers. Mantu are dumplings traditionally filled with spicy meat - this is Najee's favourite filling. Ashak are dumplings filled with leeks, and they are a great meat-free option. Serve with qurut/ 'kashk', onion and fresh mint, with a sprinkling of chilli powder and black pepper.

SERVES 50 DUMPLINGS

PREP TIME 25 MIN

COOKING TIME 60 MIN



INGREDIENTS

For the leek filling

60ml sunflower oil

6 leeks, finely diced

1½ tsp salt

2 tsp garam masala

2 tsp black pepper

1 tsp red pepper flakes

40g fresh coriander, leaves and stalks, finely chopped

For the beef filling

100ml sunflower oil

3 medium onions, finely diced

3cm fresh ginger, peeled, grated

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1 tbsp garam masala

1 tsp cumin seeds, crushed

1 tsp ground turmeric

1 tsp red chilli powder

1 tsp coriander seeds, crushed

1 tsp salt

500g minced beef

15g fresh coriander, leaves and stalks, finely chopped

METHOD

To make the leek filling

1 Heat the oil in a frying pan over medium-heat. Fry the leeks for 5 min until nearly soft. Add in the salt and spices and cook for a further minute. Remove from the heat into a large bowl. Mix in the chopped coriander. Set aside to cool.

To make the beef filling

2 Heat the oil in a frying pan, add the grated ginger and finely diced onion and fry on a medium heat for 2 min.

3 Add the finely chopped garlic, garam masala, crushed cumin seeds, turmeric, red chilli powder, coriander seeds and salt and gently fry for 1 min.

4 Add the minced beef and mix well with the onion and spice mixture, using the spoon to break down the mince. Fry on a medium heat until browned for 10 min.

5 Remove from the heat into a large bowl. Mix in the chopped coriander and set aside to cool.

To make the dumplings

6 Using your finger, rub water around the edge of the dumpling wrapper. Place 1 dessert spoon of filling in the middle. There are two different ways to seal the dumplings:

(i) fold the wrapper in half and seal around the edges, bring the two outer points together, like a tortellini, or

ii) bring two sides together over the filling, pinching the dough together in the middle. Bring the other two sides into the

3 x 250g packets gyoza wrappers

Water for the steamer

Veg oil for the steamer

For the sauce

250ml olive oil

2 medium onions, finely chopped

1 tsp garam masala

1 tsp coriander seeds, crushed

1 tsp cumin seeds, crushed

2 tbsp tomato paste

1 tsp salt

3 medium tomatoes, finely chopped

½ 400g tin whole plum tomatoes, finely chopped

200g cooked Chana Dal, boiled in water for 15 min

120ml kashk

1 tsp dried dill

3 tbsp water

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

To garnish

Black pepper, chilli powder, fresh mint, fresh dill and fresh coriander

ALLERGENS Eggs, Gluten (Wheat), Milk

SUBSTITUTIONS To make this vegan, omit the kashk and use egg-free gyoza wrappers.

NOTES

middle pinching again. This will give you 4 'petals'. Close the top of the petals together by pinching them and then finish the little purses by pinching the ends of two petals together.

7 Place a steamer on the hob with boiling water in the bottom pan. Brush oil over the base of the steamer insert. Place the dumplings on the base of the steamer insert over a medium heat for 15 min until wrappers are translucent.

To make the sauce

8 Combine the Kashk, water, garlic and dill to make a thick sauce.

9 Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat and fry the finely chopped onions for 3 min until caramelised. Add in the spices, tomato paste and salt. Fry for 1 min, stirring.

10 Add in the finely chopped tomatoes and fry for 5-10 min until the oil rises to the surface. Add the cooked chana dal and simmer for 20 min.

11 To serve, spread most of the kashk mixture on a serving dish and arrange the dumplings on top. Spoon over the sauce, drizzle with the remaining Kashk and decorate with freshly milled black pepper, red chilli powder, fresh mint, fresh dill and fresh coriander.