

Mock Butter Chicken (Kosher)



I was on a mission to achieve similar consistency and flavor profile of **butter chicken** without the butter. How would I do it and why? For one is the kosher issue, although sometimes kidding-ly on twitter I claim myself to be The Rabbinical Council of Shulie, I don't claim myself to be a kosher authority. I grew up adhering to not mixing milk products with meat and to this day I abide by it. Secondly, as you might know already, this site is hyper sensitive to some food allergies, mainly tree nuts, but this version will be a nice option for the lactose intolerant. In addition I wanted to achieve a healthier version without so much cream and butter while not compromising flavor. It meant I had to play with it.



This series of photos are from the second batch of mock butter chicken I made within a week. I gave it a twist while almond milk could be an option it won't be in line with the tree nut free character of this site, also it wouldn't have the thicker consistency I was looking for. Lite organic coconut milk was the perfect solution, as it has a more creamy consistency to it. While I love the flavor profile of coconut milk in this dish, it was mild and delicate and not overly punctuated even for leftovers the second day. Since [butter chicken](#) is of Punjabi origin, a Northern Indian dish, and I grew up on mostly Maharshtran cuisine as my parents are from Bombay, I used a recipe from [India: The Cookbook](#) by Pushpesh Pants as an inspiration.



The two batches varied in method. The first time I fried the marinated chicken as asked for in the recipe in two tablespoons of canola instead of butter. The second time I grilled the marinated chicken to mock a tandoor for a home based cook without a tandoor clay oven. Original recipe bakes/grills the marinated chicken in a tandoor and then adds it to a sauce to cook further. The grilled batch was the most authentic. The first batch I marinated for couple of hours, maybe three, and the second batch I marinated overnight, it just worked out that way out of convenience. The dish is so flavorful that I didn't notice the difference though I would recommend to marinate the chicken at the least for two hours in the fridge.

The first batch I didn't use crushed dried **fenugreek leaves** which I don't have much taste for, but in the second batch I added one out of two teaspoons of crushed dried fenugreek leaves asked for in the recipe, to see if I might, just might change my mind and develop a taste for it. I didn't develop a taste

for fenugreek, did you notice I didn't say unfortunately, and in the process needed to balance with more sugar when used fenugreek leaves. First batch I used one to two teaspoons of sugar. You can use up to one tablespoon depending on taste but the batch with fenugreek leaves needed two tablespoons of sugar.

Now on to the color and consistency, when fried the sauce developed a red film where beneath you find the creamy chicken. When grilled the sauce didn't develop the film. I liked it both ways. There are many versions to this recipe and color is dictated by how much red chili, tomatoes, spices and white be it a yogurt, cream or coconut milk you use. Therefore it can vary greatly from pinkish to deeper reds. Most Indian chefs I read achieve deeper red color. In the first dish I large cubed the chicken, similar to chicken kebabs, in second I left the boneless thighs and breasts whole. If cubing you will need to skewer and grill, if using whole, skewering isn't necessary.

In both versions where asked in the recipe for cream and yogurt I substituted with lite coconut milk and when asked for one stick butter I substituted with two tablespoons canola oil. To add a twist to the mock in the Mock Butter Chicken, I used a fresh Southern Indian garam masala mix that was sent to me generously by [Manisha](#) of [Indian Food Rocks](#) who I mentioned in my [The 411 on Champagne Mango Post](#) [here](#). Any garam masala should work here. Last mock, a cooling cucumber and lite coconut milk as a twist on the raita (cucumber yogurt condiment).

Mock Butter Chicken

Ingredients:

2 1/4 Lbs boneless chicken, cubed or whole

For the marinade:

1 Tablespoon garlic paste
1 Tablespoon ginger paste
2 Tablespoons Kashmiri or regular red chili powder (can tone down dish with less powder)
2 Teaspoons ground coriander
1 1/2 Teaspoons ground cumin
1/2 Teaspoon ground turmeric
1 1/2 Teaspoons garam masala
2 Tablespoons lime juice
2 1/4 Cups lite coconut milk
1/2 Teaspoon salt

For the sauce:

2 Tablespoons canola oil or another oil like sunflower
6 Medium tomatoes, pureed in a food processor
1 Teaspoon red chili powder
1 Teaspoon dried fenugreek leaves (I say skip this)
1/2 Teaspoon garam masala
3 Tablespoons lite coconut milk
Salt to taste

1 Teaspoon to 1 tablespoon sugar according to taste

Directions:

For the marinade mix garlic and ginger pastes, add chili, coriander, cumin, turmeric and garam masala, lime juice and mix. To the spice, pastes and line mix add coconut milk, mix and then add salt. Add whole or cubed chicken to marinade and chill in fridge for at least two hours or overnight.

While chicken is marinating, make the **tomato sauce**. Heat up 2 tablespoons of oil in a large pot (so we can add grilled chicken later) and add pureed tomatoes and salt to taste, cook on low/medium until deep red color is achieved and much moisture is evaporated. Add the chili powder, fenugreek leaves if you wish and garam masala. Mix and take off the heat. At this point if you plan to make the chicken same day, keep sauce off heat outside. If you plan to marinate chicken overnight, let tomato sauce cool and refrigerate in pan.

Skewer chicken if cubed and grill for 5-6 minutes on each side. Whole thighs and breast need not skewer. Alternatively you can broil in the oven for 5-6 minutes on each side. The chicken will cook longer in the sauce so no need to worry if not cooked through and through.

Add chicken and any excess marinade (if broiling add to tomato sauce excess marinade from broiling pan as well) to tomato sauce, add sugar and cook on low/medium for 20 minutes longer on top of the stove. Take off heat stir in 3 tablespoons of coconut milk and serve with basmati rice or Indian bread.

Bon Appetit!! This dish is Delicious!!