

Nuha's Bengali Goat Curry

by Nuha Fariha

as featured in *The Curry Goat*

While there are many ways to cook a curry, what sets Bengali recipes apart is the focus on creating the jhol. This thin gravy is slowly created over three to four hours, allowing all the delicious flavors to settle in. Long after the meat and potatoes are finished, you'll find yourself reaching for the remainder of the jhol. Prepared as written, this recipe produces about six servings of flavorful curry.

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Ingredients

- 1 kg (2.25 lbs) mutton, cubed
- 2 large potatoes (about 400 g)
- 2 Tbsp neutral oil (canola, safflower, vegetable oils all work here)
- 4 bay leaves
- 2 medium onions (about 300 g)
- 2 Tbsp garlic paste
- 1 Tbsp ginger paste
- 2 green chiles (about 20 g)
- 2 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp ground red chili

- 1 tsp coriander powder
- 2 tsp cumin
- 1 Tbsp salt
- 2 tsp garam masala
- 3 C hot water
- ½ C cilantro
- Optional: Rice (approx. ¾ C per person) or naan

Supplies

- Crockpot, dutch oven, or other heavy-bottomed pot. You'll want a cooking vessel that can be over heat for a long time.
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Instructions

Prep

- Slice onions into thin pieces.
- Cut potatoes into 2 inch chunks.
- Trim and wash cilantro.
- Rinse, trim, and chop green chiles (wear gloves to prevent skin irritation).

Step One

Cook the aromatics. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onions and cook until soft, about 10 minutes. Then add the garlic and ginger paste and cook until fragrant. Before the garlic and ginger start to brown, add spices, and cook for an additional 5 minutes to bloom the spices.

Step Two

Add the meat. When your kitchen is incredibly fragrant, add the mutton. Saute over medium heat for about 5 minutes, until brown.

Step Three

Transfer to crockpot or dutch oven. Add three cups of hot water, potatoes, and garam masala. Cook at a low simmer over low heat for three hours, until mutton is tender.

Serve

Over rice or with naan, in generous portions. Top with cilantro and chiles.

Recommended substitutions and modifications

- **Without alliums.** Leave out the onions and garlic. Consider substituting other aromatics, like celery or fennel, to add complexity without the addition of alliums.
- **Without meat.** This is a recipe that calls for a hearty, flavorful ingredient in place of meat. Sear sliced portobello mushrooms at the step that calls for the addition of lamb, and simmer them in the sauce for one hour to add ample, rich flavor; then, consider adding jackfruit or chickpeas to add a flavorful, filling vegetarian ingredient that will pick up the flavor of the sauce well.
- **Without potatoes.** Leave the potatoes out; if a substitution is desired, consider adding cubed bottle gourd instead.
- **Alternatives to mutton.** If mutton is not available, other stewing meats (such as beef) will work well here. You will need to cook the beef longer, since it's fattier than mutton; the jhol will be thicker.
- **A note on measurements:** Most Bengali cooks do not use exact measurements. The measurements in this recipe are an approximation.

Please adapt to your tastes. For example, Nuha does not like too much spice in her curry; if you like a spicier curry, feel free to add dried chile flakes!

- **One-pot version.** You can continue to cook this recipe in the skillet you sear the ingredients in, rather than moving to a crockpot or Dutch oven. Traditionally, Bengali jhol is created by adding water incrementally as water in the pot steams off. For a one-pot version, start by adding about 1 C water. Then, simply monitor the water level and add more water as needed every 15 to 20 minutes, stirring occasionally, to prevent the cooking ingredients from drying out. Add the potatoes after the first 30 minutes of cooking time, and continue until the meat is fork-tender.

Don't forget: care for yourself and the people around you. Believe that the world can be better than it is now. Never give up.