

kitchiri, kichari.. mung beans with rice!



pretty food photography is not my thing (and this dish isn't the easiest to take a nice picture of to be fair) - so thank you very much krissy for letting me use yours from krissyruddy.com *

1 cup mung beans
1 cup basmati rice
8 cups water

i only ever used whole (green) mung beans. these have to be soaked (preferably over night, in lots of fresh water), and rinsed well before cooking. i hear (yellow) split mung beans (moong dal) is commonly used as well, they need less time to soak and cook apparently.

i figure especially if you do this as a fast / mono-diet / cleanse you want to use brown basmati rice. personally i never used white basmati (for this dish), i figure this would make it very mushy. well, kitchary does translate to "mixture" / "mess", but i am not a fan of creating complete pulp.

so get a big pot, and throw in the soaked & rinsed mung beans, washed rice, and water. temperature on high to bring this to a boil.

half cup of olive oil
2 onions, chopped
8 cloves of garlic, chopped
equal volume of ginger, finely chopped
teaspoon of turmeric
teaspoon of garam marsala
big pinch of asafoetida
seeds of five cardamom pods, crushed
red chillies, sliced / diced / whatever

so when it comes to spices that's the part where the recipes vary the most. you'll figure out what you like. i heard some use cinammon and fennel which i would never consider. you might want to have more cumin or less cardamom - as your garam marsala might already contain a lot (they're not all the same). i go rather heavy on the turmeric, cardamom and the chillies and also add some extra coriander. you might be surprised how much spices the mung beans will "soak up" - also that 8 cloves of garlic might sound like a lot but fear not, it will be all right in the end.

continued..

cut up your onions, garlic and ginger, and put it in a pan with the oil and all the spices, put on medium heat, stirring occasionally.

8 cups of vegetables, diced

think vegetable soup.

get what's available and looks healthy, trying to find a balance between hearty and fresh.

my favourites include celery, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, leek, paprika and zucchini.

this is also the part where you decide what your meal will look like, color-wise - so might consider this aspect if you care.

chop your vegetables and add to the beans and rice now (adjust flame to keep it boiling if necessary).

firm things like carrots first and the more delicate ones like broccoli later so they cook somewhat evenly.

again - this will be a stew later, it's the idea behind it, it will not be "al dente" - but it's not necessary to cook everything to death either.

now pour the oil with all the spices in there as well, keep on a slow but steady boil.

it will thicken, so you'll have to stir to prevent it from burning, maybe even add another cup or two of water, depending on what kind and how much vegetables you used.

in my experience it's better not to rush it, but let it cook slowly and steadily, so flavours can roam.

some people add bay leaves.

i add soy sauce or tamari at this stage (in case you didn't notice there's not a grain of salt in all of this yet :)

if you are making a huge batch (for eating the next day, freezing etc.) consider putting aside a part of it now (it's not "done yet" - but will cook furthermore while cooling down - and again when you'll be heating it up).

post-cooking spices & things

so while it's important to bring quite a bit of flavour in there during the cooking process there's a few things I deliberately add when it's done. please try and error yourself, you may like some (or all) of the following:

basil (dried basil stirred in is real good actually, fresh tulsi is wonderful though)

a dollop of plain yoghurt (especially if you were a bit enthusiastic with the chillies, it brings down the heat)

(more) soy sauce or tamari

dash of olive oil

ground black pepper

mature cheese if you like (like cave-ripened / "alpine" cheese)

enjoy your meal!

sunny greetings, and sat nam!

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