

# Kheema Lobia

minced lamb & black eyed beans

serves 8 - 12

medium heat

Each year my sister makes a huge pot of Chili con Carne on Firework Night and invites round loads of friends to enjoy the fireworks and the food. The Chili bubbles away while everyone's enjoying the fireworks and then they all tuck in when the show is over. The Chili is always excellent and is always much appreciated by the cold and hungry guests.

So, for The Curry House autumn recipe, I thought I would create a curry equivalent to Chili as something of a change. My recipe is for Kheema Lobia which is spicy minced lamb with black eyed beans. If you or your guests don't like lamb then you can easily substitute minced beef instead.

You will get 8 meal-sized portions or 12 buffet-sized portions from the recipe. Cater for 1 shop-bought nan bread per person and heat up the nan bread, wrapped in kitchen foil, in the oven. If you serve lots of onion bhajis and samosas before the festivities begin you might even stretch out the portions a little more although I wouldn't rely on it (standing out in the cold and damp usually makes people very, very hungry).

Do be careful how much chilli powder you add. Chilli powder varies hugely in heat from brand to brand. Always err on the side of caution. Remember that you can always add more chilli powder if you find the curry is too mild but you can never take out excess heat once it's in the curry! Remember too, if you do add more chilli powder, to give the curry a good 10 minutes to absorb and distribute the heat before you test it again.

The recipe is very flexible. You will see from the method that you can make Kheema Lobia the day before if you like and that the curry will hold well if your festivities take a bit longer than expected. Which all means you can relax and enjoy the fun without worrying about the curry spoiling.

## ingredients

4 medium-large onions, finely chopped  
8 cloves garlic  
2 × 35mm “fingers” of fresh ginger 15–18 mm in diameter  
2 × 15ml spoons ground cumin seed  
2 × 15ml spoons ground coriander seed  
4 × 5ml spoons turmeric  
about 1½ × 5ml spoons hot chilli powder  
(use more or less depending on the heat of your chilli powder)  
1 × 2.5ml spoon ground cinnamon  
1/3 × 2.5ml spoon ground cloves  
9 × 15ml spoons vegetable oil  
1 kilo minced lamb (use minced beef if you prefer)  
6 × 15ml spoons Greek-style (*full fat*) yoghurt  
1½ × 5ml spoons lemon juice  
1 × 5ml spoon sugar  
2 × 15ml spoons concentrated tomato purée (*tomato paste*)  
5–6 grinds black peppercorns from a large pepper mill  
salt to taste  
1 × 400g tin chopped tomatoes, drained (reserve liquid)  
2 × 400g tins of black eyed beans, drained (discard liquid)  
20 grams chopped coriander (*cilantro*) leaves and thin stalks

## special equipment

a 3 litre capacity heavy bottomed pan (e.g. a 22cm diameter Le Creuset cast iron pan)  
a 28cm non-stick frying pan

## method

1. Trim the onions and peel off the skin. Chop the onions finely.
2. Trim the garlic cloves and remove the skin. Grate the garlic cloves using the fine mesh of a grater. Discard any solid pieces you have left over.
3. Peel the skin off the ginger pieces and grate the ginger using the fine mesh of a grater. Although you need to grate 2 × 35mm lengths of ginger each piece will need to be somewhat longer; the excess being a “handle” with which to hold the ginger as you are grating it. Discard the excess.

4. Mix the grated garlic and ginger (and any juices from the grating) together in a small bowl.
5. Measure out the ground cumin, coriander, turmeric, chilli powder, cinnamon and cloves and pile them up all together on a plate.
6. Heat the oil in the heavy bottomed pan over a medium/high heat. Add the chopped onions to the pan and stir fry for about 5 minutes. Reduce the heat to minimum and sauté the onions for about 20 minutes. Stir the onions occasionally to make sure none of the pieces browns or burns.
7. While the onions are gently cooking place the non-stick frying pan over a high heat. Divide the minced lamb into 4 × 250g batches.
8. Add the first 250g batch of lamb to the hot frying pan. Use a wooden spoon to stir the lamb and break up all the lumps. Keep frying, stirring and breaking up lumps until you have short individual strands of minced lamb. Boil off any liquid dropped by the lamb and fry the lamb until no pink meat remains.
9. Take the frying pan off the heat and remove the lamb with a slotted spoon. Place the lamb in a bowl which is large enough to accommodate all 4 batches. Drain off the fat from the frying pan and discard.
10. Repeat the above process for the other 3 batches of lamb. Don't forget to stir the onions in the other pan every now and again.
11. By the time you have finished frying all the lamb the onions should be soft and golden. Add the garlic and ginger paste to the onions and stir fry for 2 minutes. Then add the ground spices and stir fry for 1 minute.
12. Raise the heat to medium-high. Add the yoghurt to the mixture a spoonful at a time. Stir in each spoonful and fry a little before adding the next one.
13. Tip the reserved lamb into the pan. Stir well until the lamb is thoroughly coated with the spicy mixture. Now add the lemon juice, sugar, concentrated tomato purée, ground black pepper, salt and the drained tomato pieces.
14. Bring the mixture to the boil stirring all the time. Then reduce the heat right down so the mixture is just simmering.
15. Don't be tempted to add extra liquid at this stage. The curry will seem quite dry but the tomato pieces will provide enough moisture for the time being. Although you will add more liquid, a little at a time, later on if you dumped it all in now you would end up with a boiled taste. Good curries always have a stir fried taste which means keeping the liquid to a minimum during this part of the cooking process.

16. If the mixture does start frying because all the liquid has evaporated then now is the time to add 1 or 2 × 15ml spoons of liquid. Use the reserved juice from the chopped tomatoes first and then move on to plain water.

17. Simmer the curry for about 45 minutes adding only a spoonful or two of extra water whenever it becomes necessary. Stir the curry from time to time to ensure it doesn't catch on the bottom of the pan.

18. You now have a number of choices :

If you are ready to eat then you can press on to the final stages.

If you are not ready to eat yet but want to leave the curry to its own devices you can safely add enough liquid at this stage to make a fluid (but not runny) sauce and let it simmer away on a minimum heat until you are ready. If your firework display goes on longer than expected you may need to add a little more water and stir the curry from time to time.

If you are making the curry the day before you can let the curry cool down to room temperature and then refrigerate it until needed.

19. Whatever you decided to do at the previous stage the next stage is to finish off the curry.

20. Add the drained black eyed beans to the curry. Add just enough water to get a smooth (but not runny) consistency. Now bring the curry up to boiling point and then reduce the heat so the curry is just simmering. Cook for 10 minutes so the beans are heated right through.

21. Add the finely chopped coriander and cook for a final 5 minutes.

22. Serve in individual bowls.



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