

# Moghul Masala

Serves 2

The Moghul dynasty ruled the northern part of the Asian sub-continent for 3 centuries and left behind a fabulous legacy not just in art and architecture but also in sumptuous cuisine. The Moghuls were Muslims from central Asia but considered Persian culture as the pinnacle of civilisation both in the arts and in cuisine.

Persian dishes were transformed with Indian spices and cooking methods to become the *haute cuisine* of the Moghul empire. Lavish banquets with scores of dishes would be served to visiting dignitaries. At the time of the Moghul emperor Akbar (1556–1605) there were up to 400 cooks in the imperial kitchens. There would be specialist rice cooks, vegetable cooks and so on but the top chefs would prepare the “masalas” or spice pastes which introduced a fine balance of aromatic and pungent tastes to the finished dishes.

Now, of course, your local Indian restaurant cannot cook a Moghul banquet to order; the time and cost would be prohibitive. But the curry house menu does often contain a curry in the Moghul style. Moghul Masala contains plenty of ginger, ground almonds, yoghurt and cream and is richly garnished. Some restaurants garnish the curry with slices of boiled egg or a small omelette cooked with chopped coriander leaves. You can follow that example if you like.

## ingredients

1 batch of pre-cooked [chicken](#), pre-cooked [lamb](#), prawns or vegetarian option  
1 egg (for optional garnish)  
2 × 15ml spoons vegetable oil  
2 cloves  
1 piece cassia bark about 30mm x 7mm  
1 × 2.5ml spoon grated ginger  
3 × 15ml spoons ground almonds  
4 × 15ml spoons [Curry Base](#)  
1 × 5ml spoon ground coriander  
½ a 2.5ml spoon *hot* chilli powder  
3 × 15ml spoons Greek-style yoghurt  
3 pinches garam masala  
1 × 2.5ml spoon lime juice  
salt  
[Curry Stock](#) or water to loosen the curry  
1 × 15ml spoon double cream  
finely chopped fresh coriander leaves to garnish

## method

1. Make the Curry Base.
2. Pre-cook the meat (if using).
3. Place the egg (if using) in a small saucepan, cover with cold water and bring to the boil. Boil the egg for 7 minutes. Remove the egg from the pan with tongs or a spoon and plunge it into plenty of cold water. Leave to cool.
4. Heat the oil in a 20cm heavy bottomed saucepan over a medium/high heat.
5. Drop the cloves and cassia bark into the oil. Wait for the cloves to swell up a little then add the grated ginger and stir fry for 10 seconds or so.
6. Reduce the heat to medium and add the ground almonds. Stir fry for 20 seconds or so and then add the ground coriander and chilli powder and stir fry for just 10 more seconds.
7. Now add the yoghurt 15ml at a time and stir fry each spoonful until it is incorporated into the sauce and some of the moisture has been driven off.
8. Once the yoghurt has all been incorporated add the Curry Base and stir to mix.
9. Add the garam masala and lime juice and stir through.
10. Bring the sauce to the boil and simmer gently for 10 minutes stirring from time to time.
11. If the curry gets too thick add a little Curry Stock or water to loosen the sauce. Wait until that liquid has gone before adding more but make sure the sauce is quite dry before adding the pre-cooked meat.
12. Now add the pre-cooked chicken or lamb (see below if you are using prawns or a vegetarian option) and all the juices that have collected in the bowl into the saucepan. Stir to coat the meat with sauce.
13. Cook for 7 minutes so the meat is completely heated through.
14. If you are making a prawn or vegetarian curry then cook the sauce for a further 7 minutes and add the prawns or vegetarian option 3 minutes before the end of the cooking to heat through but make sure the sauce is quite dry before you do so.
15. Make sure the sauce is quite thick once again before adding the cream as the cream will loosen the sauce quite a lot. Now pour in the double cream and bring the curry back up to simmering point to finish the cooking.
16. Taste the curry and add salt and a little more lime juice if necessary.
17. Remove the shell from the egg you boiled earlier (if using) and slice it with an egg slicer.
18. Remove the cloves and cassia bark and transfer the curry to a warmed serving dish. Garnish with the slices of boiled egg (optional) and a sprinkling of chopped coriander leaves.