



Red Lentil Dal with
Rice & Raita
Elissa Ames Meier

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Delicious as breakfast on a cold rainy day,
when one needs comfort and substance. A
perfect dish to fill your home with a
beautiful cleansing aroma!

Makes 6-8 hearty servings



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INGREDIENTS

Raïta

2 cups plain yogurt
1 cup cucumber, grated
¼ cup red onion, finely diced
2 Tbsp fresh cilantro, chopped
1 Tbsp kosher salt
½ tsp pepper
¼ tsp cayenne
(optional: ¼ cup chick peas, drained)
(optional: ½ cup canned tomatoes, chopped well and drained)

Dal

¼ cup vegetable oil
½ cup yellow onion, small dice
1 Tbsp garlic, minced
2 Tbsp curry powder
1 Tbsp ground cumin
1 tsp freshly-ground black pepper
4 canned whole tomatoes
1-2 hot chili pepper (thai bird, or a serrano if you prefer)
1 cup red lentils, sorted and rinsed
3 cups water
5-10 stems (and leaves) cilantro, chopped roughly
½ cup chick peas, drained
2 Tbsp kosher salt

Rice

1 cup white basmati rice, rinsed well
1 star anise pod
1 bay leaf
1 Tbsp salt
¼ tsp black pepper, ground
2 cups cold water
1 Tbsp olive oil

1. Rinse the rice: Place the rice in a large bowl, and run cold water over it gently until the water in the bowl clears of the starch. This will help keep the rice from becoming too sticky. Strain out the rice and set aside. Discard the water.
2. Sort and rinse the lentils: pour the lentils out onto a rimmed cookie sheet or other large platter with edges. Check through the lentils for stones, bad lentils, or any other randomly collected material that might have accidentally made it through to you.
3. Chop all the vegetables for the raita and dal. Don't get caught chopping vegetables while the dish is cooking!
4. Combine the ingredients for the raita in a bowl. Mix well and set aside, covered, in a refrigerator, until the rest of the dish is ready. It's even better left overnight.
5. Heat a heavy-bottomed pot over high heat, and add the vegetable oil. When it begins to shimmer, add the diced onion and stir well. Cook 2-3 minutes, stirring frequently, then add the garlic, curry powder, cumin, and black pepper. Stir well and cook another 2-3 minutes, until the spices become fragrant.
6. Crush the tomatoes one by one in your hand over the pot, and drop the pulp in. Savor the satisfaction of crushing tomatoes. Add the chili peppers - Thai bird peppers if you like heat, serranos if you prefer a milder spice. Mix well and let all the ingredients come to a bubble for 4-5 minutes.
7. Add the lentils, and give a couple stirs to mix. Pour in the water and throw the cilantro in along with it, and stir the whole pot well. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer.
8. Simmer gently for 15-20 minutes, or until the lentils are tender, stirring occasionally. If the pot dries out, add more liquid. After the lentils are tender, season evenly with the salt. Adjust to taste.
9. While the lentils are simmering, combine the rinsed rice and measured water in a saucepan; add the bay leaf, star anise, black pepper, and olive oil. Stir well. Bring the pot to a boil, then reduce to a gentle simmer and cover. Cook for 15 minutes, then remove from the heat and let steam for 10 minutes more.
10. Open the lid and fluff the rice with a fork. Fish out the bay leaf and star anise pod. Allow the rice to steam and cool off slightly for 5-10 minutes, then cover until needed.
11. Combine in a bowl, in this order: Rice down first, then dal, then a healthy spoonful of raita. Garnish with a cilantro leaf (or chopped cilantro,) and a squeeze of lemon juice for a bit of brightness.