



Gretchen's table: Beef and eggplant curry offers adapted Indian flair



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Beef and Eggplant Curry

PG tested

The best tasting foods are often the family favorites our mothers and grandmothers made for us as children. Yet, how we recreate the recipes as grown-ups sometimes depends on where we end up living and whether the ingredients we know from home are readily available.

When [Anar Gourmet Foods](#) founder Priya Osuri of Richland was growing up in India, her family made this mildly spicy meat-and-vegetable curry with chunks of lamb, since that's the most popular red meat eaten there. It was only after her family moved to the U.S. in her early teens that they modified the recipe to instead include beef, "as it was much easier to find," she says, not to mention less expensive.

Osuri prefers to make the curry in a pressure cooker, which does a good job of tenderizing tougher meats and dramatically reduces cooking time for dried beans. Without one on hand, I ended up slow-cooking the dish in a Dutch oven on the stovetop and am pretty sure I achieved just as wonderful results. It took a little longer for the meat to become fork tender, but the aroma of the meat, tomatoes and spices simmering on the stove for hours was delightful.

Tamarind, which adds a sweet-sour flavor to foods, imparts a delightful punch into this dish. For a vegetarian/vegan version, substitute 4 cups peeled and diced potatoes for the meat. Osuri recommends using Anar Gourmet Foods Hot Curry Powder for best results.

I served it with white rice, poppadom and a spicy-as-heck coriander chutney.

2 -2½ pounds beef or lamb, cut into bite-sized pieces

1 medium eggplant, diced into bite-sized pieces (about 3-4 cups)

2 cups diced tomatoes (I used canned)

½ tablespoon deseeded and finely diced jalapeno pepper, or to taste

1½ teaspoons curry powder for medium spice, or to taste

1½ teaspoons salt (or same proportions as curry powder)

1 teaspoon turmeric

3 tablespoons olive oil

5 whole peppercorns

1 cup yellow or purple onion, finely diced

2 teaspoons tamarind paste mixed with ¼ cup water, optional

In large bowl, mix meat along with eggplant, tomatoes, jalapeño, curry powder, salt and turmeric. Pour into a resealable plastic bag and marinate mixture for at least 2 hours or overnight for best results.

When ready to cook, add oil to a large Dutch oven and heat until sizzling. Add peppercorns, and saute for 30 seconds, or until they pop.

Add onions to pan and sauté them for 5-7 minutes, or until they are light brown and edges start to curl up.

Add marinated mix of meat and eggplant to pan and mix well to combine.

Add $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water, or just enough to cover the ingredients. (My pot required a little more than 1 cup.) Cover pot tightly with lid, bring mixture to a boil and simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour, or until meat is tender and falls apart easily. (Using chuck steak, my curry took about 2 hours to become fork tender.) Add a little water during cooking if gravy starts to evaporate.

Taste curry; if you like the taste, skip the tamarind. If you prefer more punch, add tamarind mixed with water to the pot and boil for another 2-3 minutes, or until the gravy thickens. Add more salt to taste, if desired.

Serve hot over white basmati rice or with naan for scooping.

Serves 4-6.

— *Priya Osuri, Anar Gourmet Foods*

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