

Dumpling Sambar

(with tamarind sauce and buttermilk sauce)

I love this dinner. I especially like setting my dumplings in 2 different sauces. One made of buttermilk and the other, in a tamarind sauce. I still have not made up my mind which one I like best, but to me, it is like having a balance of opposites like masculine and feminine energy.

Lemon sized tamarind pulp
2 cups hot water
3 tsp sambar powder
Salt to taste (extra)
2 tbs powdered jaggery (or raw sugar)
1 cup red lentils, picked over and rinsed
4-6 red chili peppers
½ tsp asafoetida powder
Salt
1 tbs oil
Few curry leaves

For tempering: Tamarind Sambar

2 tbs sesame oil
1 tsp brown mustard seeds
1/2 tsp fenugreek
2 red chilies
½ tsp asafoetida powder
A few curry leaves
1 tsp black gram dal or urid dhal rinsed
1 tsp yellow split peas
1 tsp red lentils

For tempering: Buttermilk Sambar

2 tbs sesame oil
1 tsp brown mustard seeds
few red chilies
½ asafoetida powder
few curry leaves
salt to taste
plain yoghurt
1 tsp each of red lentils, split peas and urid dal
1 tsp turmeric

Method:

Soak the tamarind in 2 cups hot water, squeeze juice out and discard pulp. Set this aside for later.
(can use thinner tamarind, all ready to use)

Dumplings:

Soak red lentils and chilies in water for 2-3 hrs, then drain and wiz in a blender
Add salt to taste and asfoetida and blend to a paste.
Heat 1 tbs of oil in heavy frying pan and add a few curry leaves and the ground paste. Sauté 2-3 min.
Remove from heat and make into little balls.
Place them in idli stand or colander over hot water and cover and steam for about 20 min.

Tempering for the Tamarind Sambar:

Heat the oil in a heavy pan and add mustard seeds, fenugreek, red chili, asafoetida and a few curry leaves. When mustard seeds pop, add dal.
When golden, add sambar powder and cook 1 min.
Add tamarind, salt, and jaggery. Cover and simmer for about 10 min.
Add half of the dumplings.

Tempering for the Buttermilk Sambar;

Heat the oil in a heavy pan and add mustard seeds, red chili, turmeric, asafoetida, turmeric and a few curry leaves. When mustard seeds pop add dal.

When golden, add yoghurt.

Don't cook so much that it curdles. Just gently heat and drop in some of the dumplings.

Serve with some brown basmati rice and sautéed kale or with the green bean dish below with fresh coconut.

Green Beans and Coconut

1 lb string beans (long thin Indian ones, if you can get them)

2 tbs fresh grated coconut or 2 ½ tbs flaked coconut

Salt

2 tbs water

For tempering:

2 tsp oil

1 tsp brown mustard seeds

1 tsp cumin seeds

1 tsp urid dhal, yellow split peas and red lentils

1 red chili

½ tsp asafoetida powder

Few fresh curry leaves

Wash, trim and chop the beans.

Heat oil in a heavy pan and add mustard seeds, cumin, dhal, chili, asafoetida and curry leaves until mustard seeds jumps.

Add beans, water and salt. Cover and cook until tender on low heat.

Add coconut and serve.

Not everyone likes curry or fancies a curry, so you can take the 6 tastes and use them in an oriental dish. A simple stir fry is quick and nutritious. If you have family members who want to have fish in the dish, then that would be an excellent source of the taste of salt. It could be served as a side dish or added to the vegetables. Black pepper can be a source of pungent for those who don't care for chili.

Quick Asian Dish with 6 Tastes

Sweet

Sugar

Sour

Tempeh

Salty

Soy sauce or tamari

Astringent

Rice vinegar

Bitter

Green leafy vegetables like bok choy, kale, cabbage

Pungent

Chili, black pepper

Have a selection of your vegetables chopped in advance. When you are ready, fire up the wok or large pan and add a few tablespoon of your chosen oil.

Maybe add some crushed garlic, chili and grated ginger to the pan first, and once fragrance escapes add in all of the other ingredients. Onions, carrots, sweet peppers and beans make an interesting combination. This is a great way to use small amounts of vegetables you may have in the fridge.

Add the green leafy vegetables last, along with the tempeh and then stir in a sauce made of few tps. sugar, tablespoon of vinegar, soy sauce and water. (*you can experiment and taste what combination works for you*)

A few sesame seeds sprinkled on top can add interest and nutrition, along with some chopped cilantro. Serve with brown rice.

The great thing about a stir fry is that it is quick to cater for individual family members. Small children may even enjoy assembling a dish of what they want cooked for you and watch the cooking process.