

Murgh Makhani (Butter Chicken)

Serves 4-6

2 pounds chicken, washed, patted dry and cut into small pieces (with or without bones, chicken thighs or a combination of breast and thighs)

1 teaspoon red chili powder

1 Tablespoon lemon juice

Salt

Oil/butter/ghee to baste while grilling

Marinade

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup plain yogurt, strained/hung or use

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Greek yogurt

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoons kasuri methi/dried fenugreek leaves

$\frac{1}{2}$ - 1 teaspoon turmeric

1 teaspoon garam masala

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tablespoon mustard oil, or any other cooking oil to substitute

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ Tablespoon ginger paste

$\frac{1}{2}$ Tablespoon garlic paste

Sauce/Makhani Masala

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch fresh ginger, made into a paste

8-10 cloves of garlic, made into a paste

2-4 fresh green chili pepper, slit



4 Tablespoon melted butter

4 green cardamoms

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 inch cinnamon sticks

3 cloves

1 black cardamom

1 teaspoon methi/fenugreek seeds

3-3 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups tomato puree (fresh tomatoes)

1 Tablespoon red chili powder/cayenne pepper/paprika or to taste

10 almonds, soaked, peeled and made into a paste

1 teaspoon garam masala

2 teaspoons kasuri methi/dried fenugreek leaves, crushed

$\frac{1}{2}$ Tablespoon sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup + 2 Tablespoon heavy cream

Apply red chili powder, lemon juice and salt to the chicken and set aside for 20 minutes. Combine all ingredients for the marinade. Apply this marinade to the chicken and refrigerate for three to four hours; overnight works better.

Put the chicken on skewers and cook on a grill or a preheated oven at 400°F, for about 10 minutes while turning them over mid-way. Cook until done. Do not overcook, as the chicken will dry out and get fibrous. Baste it with butter/ghee/oil a couple of times while cooking.

Alternately, the chicken can be grilled on a skillet/cast iron pan/grill pan on the stove top too. Heat the skillet or grill pan and coat it with oil. Place the skewers and cook while turning them around and basting with oil and marinade until done, for about 15 minutes. Remove and set aside.

Heat butter/ghee or oil in a thick bottomed pan. Add green cardamoms, black cardamom, cloves and cinnamon. Sauté for a couple of minutes or till they start to sizzle and get fragrant; add the methi/fenugreek seeds. When the methi seeds sizzle, add ginger paste and garlic paste, and the slit green chillies. Cook for five to eight minutes; the water from the paste would have evaporated and the ginger garlic paste would have reduced in quantity.

Add tomato puree, red chili powder, and salt. Cook at medium heat for about 15 – 20 minutes. The puree will reduce to a thick paste and the oil/ghee will separate from the sides of the pan.

Add 2 ½ cups of hot water to the pan (or if you want it less soupy and want the sauce to kind of coat the chicken pieces and have a little bit extra, add less water or simmer for longer time to achieve the preferred consistency as per your taste), add the almond paste and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for about 15 minutes; add sugar and crushed kasuri methi.

Add cooked grilled chicken pieces. Stir well to combine – the chicken will be well coated with the sauce. Cover and simmer for eight to ten minutes; Lower the heat and add garam masala and the heavy cream. Stir in the cream and simmer at low heat for about five more minutes.

Garnish with fresh cilantro and add a splash of cream before serving.