

■ Paneer Tikka

Description: Paneer Tikka is a popular North Indian appetizer made by marinating cubes of paneer (Indian cottage cheese) in a spiced yogurt-based marinade, then grilling or baking them to smoky perfection. It's flavorful, aromatic, and served hot with mint chutney and onion rings.

Cuisine: Indian (North)

■ Time Required:

- Prep Time: 20 minutes
- Marination Time: 2 hours
- Cook Time: 15 minutes

■ Ingredients:

- 1 250g Paneer, cut into 1.5-inch cubes
- 2 1 cup Thick Yogurt (hung curd)
- 3 1 large Onion, cut into squares
- 4 1 large Bell Pepper (Capsicum), cut into squares
- 5 1 tbsp Ginger-Garlic Paste
- 6 1 tbsp Gram Flour (Besan)
- 7 1 tsp Turmeric Powder
- 8 1.5 tsp Red Chili Powder (Kashmiri for color)
- 9 1 tsp Garam Masala
- 10 1 tsp Chaat Masala
- 11 1 tbsp Lemon Juice
- 12 2 tbsp Mustard Oil (or any vegetable oil)
- 13 Salt to taste

■■■ Instructions:

- 1 In a large bowl, whisk the thick yogurt until smooth. Add ginger-garlic paste, gram flour, turmeric, red chili powder, garam masala, chaat masala, lemon juice, and salt. Mix well to form a thick, smooth marinade.
- 2 Heat mustard oil in a small pan until it begins to smoke slightly. Let it cool for a minute, then pour it into the marinade. Mix well—this removes the raw smell of the oil.
- 3 Gently add paneer cubes, onion squares, and bell pepper squares to the marinade. Coat them evenly without breaking the paneer.
- 4 Cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least 2 hours (or up to 6 hours) for the flavors to develop.
- 5 Preheat your oven to 220°C (430°F).
- 6 Thread the marinated paneer, onion, and bell pepper alternately onto wooden or metal skewers.
- 7 Line a baking tray with parchment paper or aluminum foil. Place the skewers on the tray, ensuring they don't touch each other. Bake for 10–15 minutes, turning halfway through, until the paneer is lightly charred and cooked through.
- 8 Sprinkle extra chaat masala and a squeeze of lemon juice before serving.
- 9 Serve hot with mint chutney and onion rings.