

Channa Masala Recipe

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As one of the most popular dishes in the world, both in and out of India and Pakistan, *channa masala* (or *chana masala*, *chole masala*, or *chholay*, depending on where you're from)—chickpeas cooked in a spicy and tangy tomato-based sauce—is the kind of dish that stirs passions in the recipe-writing community. My version might not taste like your grandmother's, but I promise that it tastes damn good.



Why It Works

- Adding baking soda to the onions helps them break down and caramelize faster.
- Doctoring up store-bought garam masala with additional spices produces a flavor that's both complex and suited to the dish.
- Simmering canned chickpeas lends them plenty of flavor.
- Grinding the garlic in lemon juice helps prevent it from turning too sharp and pungent, while still allowing its aroma to shine.

YIELD: Serves 4 to 6

ACTIVE TIME: 50 minutes

TOTAL TIME: 50 minutes

Ingredients

4 medium cloves garlic,
roughly chopped

1 (1-inch) knob ginger, peeled,
roughly chopped

1 to 6 green Thai chilies (to
taste), roughly chopped

2 tablespoons (30ml) juice
from 1 lemon, divided

Kosher salt

2 tablespoons (30ml)
vegetable oil or ghee

2 teaspoons (8g) black
mustard seed

Directions

1. Combine garlic, ginger, chilies, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, and 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt in a mortar and pestle or in the small work bowl of a food processor and pound or process until a fine paste is produced. Set aside.
2. Heat oil or ghee in a large saucepan or Dutch oven over medium-high heat until shimmering. All at once, add mustard seed and cumin. They will sputter and spit for a few seconds. As soon as they are aromatic (about 15 seconds), add onion all at once, along with baking soda. Cook, stirring frequently, until onions start to leave a brown coating on bottom of pan, 3 to 4 minutes. Add 1 tablespoon water, scrape up browned bits from pan, and continue cooking. Repeat this process until onions are a deep brown, about 10 minutes total.
3. Immediately add garlic/ginger/chili paste all at once and stir to combine. Add coriander, black pepper, turmeric, and 1 teaspoon garam masala. Stir until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add tomatoes and crush them using a whisk or potato masher. Add drained, rinsed

1 teaspoon (4g) whole cumin seed

1 large onion, finely diced (about 1 1/2 cups; 300g)

1/4 teaspoon (1g) baking soda

2 teaspoons (8g) ground coriander

1/2 teaspoon (2g) freshly ground black pepper

1/2 teaspoon (2g) ground turmeric

1 1/2 teaspoons (6g) store-bought or [homemade garam masala](#), divided

1 (14-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes

2 (14-ounce) cans chickpeas, drained and rinsed

1 cup cilantro leaves, roughly chopped (1 ounce; 25g)

chickpeas and cilantro, reserving a little cilantro for garnish. Add 1/2 cup water.

4. Bring to a simmer, cover with lid slightly cracked, and reduce heat to maintain a gentle bubbling. Cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid has reduced into a thick stew and spices have melded, about 30 minutes.
5. Stir in remaining garam masala and lemon juice. Season to taste with salt. Serve with rice and/or [naan](#), sprinkling additional cilantro on top.

Special Equipment

Mortar and pestle or food processor