

## Maunika Gowardhan's recipes for her favourite dals



Maunika Gowardhan's dals: (from left to right) langarwali dal, dal dhokli, gothsu dal. Photograph: Louise Hagger/The Guardian. Food styling: Emily Kydd. Prop

<https://www.theguardian.com/food/2024/jan/16/dal-recipes-langarwali-dal-kathirikai-gothsu-gujarati-dal-dhokli-maunika-gowardhan>

### Langarwali dal

... or creamy dal cooked with ginger, chilli and turmeric. This comforting dish is served at many *gurudwaras*, Sikh places of worship, where fresh meals are prepared daily in the *langar*, or communal kitchen, for everyone who wishes to eat. This recipe uses black split urad dal, also known as *urad dal chilka*, which takes on a rich, creamy consistency when cooked. I use kashmiri chilli powder for its mild heat and vibrant colour, but you can swap it for mild paprika, if you prefer. The *tadka*, or tempering, at the end gives this humble dal lots more flavour.

Prep 10 min

Soak 30 min

Cook 1 hr 40 min

Serves 4

280g black split urad dal

2 tbsp ghee

**A pinch of asafoetida**  
**5cm piece ginger**, peeled and finely chopped  
**1 green bird's eye chilli**, slit lengthways  
**150g tomatoes**, roughly chopped  
**2 tsp turmeric powder**  
**½ tsp kashmiri chilli powder**  
**Salt**, to taste  
**1 tsp garam masala**  
**A pinch of sugar**  
**Coriander**, to garnish  
For the tadka  
**1 tbsp ghee**  
**1 tsp cumin seeds**  
**2 dried mild red chillies**

Soak the dal in cold water for 30 minutes, then drain. Put the dal and a litre and a half of fresh water in a large saucepan, bring to a simmer on a medium heat and cook for an hour and 20 minutes, stirring occasionally to make sure it doesn't stick to the bottom of the pan. Once cooked, mash the soft dal slightly and set aside.

Put the ghee in a large nonstick saucepan on a medium heat, add the asafoetida and fry for a few seconds. Stir in the ginger, add the chilli and fry for a minute. Add the tomatoes and cook for four minutes, until they soften and turn mushy. Add the turmeric and chilli powder, fry for a minute, then add the cooked dal, season with salt to taste and simmer, stirring occasionally, for three minutes. Add 200ml water, to loosen the mix, then cover and simmer on a low heat for three to four minutes. Add the garam masala and sugar, garnish with coriander and turn off the heat.

Put the ghee for the tadka in a small pan on a medium heat, then add the cumin and chillies, and fry for a minute. Pour the flavoured oil over the dal, stir and cover the pot so the flavours infuse. Serve warm with rotis.

## Gujarati dal dhokli

A warming dal flavoured with whole spices, ginger, green chillies, tamarind and jaggery. This classic from Gujarat in the west of India is made with *toor dal*, a common everyday dal, and is traditionally served with *dhokli*, or wholewheat flour and carom seed pasta. I have used ghee because it lends so much more flavour to the finished dish. Adjust the amount of tamarind to taste, depending on the strength of the paste you have.

**Prep 10 min**  
**Rest 15 min**  
**Cook 1 hr 40 min**  
**Serves 4**

For the dal  
**200g toor dal** (AKA split pigeon peas)

**A pinch of turmeric**  
**A pinch of salt**  
**2 tbsp ghee, or vegetable oil**  
**A pinch of asafoetida**  
**1 tsp mustard seeds**  
**½ tsp cumin seeds**  
**4 cloves**  
**2½cm-long cinnamon stick, halved**  
**80g thinly sliced white onion**  
**2 green chillies, slit lengthways**  
**10-12 curry leaves**  
**1 tbsp grated fresh ginger**  
**1 tsp turmeric powder**  
**½ tsp kashmiri chilli powder**  
**1 tsp tamarind paste, or to taste**  
**2 tbsp jaggery, or soft brown sugar**  
**Salt**  
**2 tbsp chopped fresh coriander**  
**80g finely chopped red onion**  
**Juice of 1 lemon, to finish**

For the dhokli

**125g wholemeal flour**  
**2 heaped tbsp chickpea (gram) flour**  
**½ tsp mild red chilli powder**  
**½ tsp turmeric powder**  
**1 tsp carom seeds (AKA ajwain)**  
**Salt**  
**1 tbsp vegetable oil, plus extra for rolling**

Put the dal, turmeric, salt and 1.2 litres water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Turn down to a simmer and cook for 45-50 minutes, until the dal is cooked all the way through. Leave to cool slightly, then, using a hand blender or potato masher, coarsely mash – it shouldn't be too smooth.

Now for the dhokli. Mix all the ingredients and 100ml water in a large bowl, then knead until the mix comes together into a smooth dough. Cover and set aside to rest for at least 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, in a large, heavy-based saucepan, heat the ghee on a medium heat, add the asafoetida and mustard seeds, and leave to splutter for a few seconds. Add the cumin, fry for 10 seconds, then add the cloves and cinnamon, and fry for a few seconds more. Add the sliced onion and fry for six to seven minutes, until it begins to soften and colour. Stir in the green chillies and half the curry leaves, then add the ginger and fry for 30 seconds, stirring so it doesn't catch. Add the powdered spices, stir for a few seconds, then add the cooked dal, tamarind paste and jaggery. Add salt to taste, then leave to simmer gently on a low heat for six to seven minutes.

Meanwhile, make the dhokli. Pour two tablespoons of vegetable oil into a bowl – this will make the dhokli easier to roll out. Divide the dough into four equal portions, roll

into balls, then roll in the oil to coat. Roll out each ball into a 15cm-diameter circle, then, using a pizza cutter or knife, cut into 2½cm-wide strips.

Add 400ml water to the dal pan, simmer for a minute, then drop in the dhokli strips one at a time, stirring gently so they don't stick to the pan. Leave to cook for 15 minutes, stirring a few times, then turn off the heat. Ladle into bowls and serve warm topped with fresh coriander, chopped red onion and lemon juice

## **Kathirikai gothsu**

This classic dish from Tamil Nadu, and similar to a traditional sambar, features aubergines cooked with lentils, green chilli, tamarind and curry leaves. The use of *moong dal*, or yellow mung beans, gives it texture. I have also used *daria dal*, or split roasted gram, which is ground with spices and used both to thicken the gothsu and to lend it a nutty flavour. Check the strength of your tamarind paste before adding it to the pot – if it's too tangy and sharp, reduce the amount listed.

**Prep 15 min**

**Cook 50 min**

**Serves 4**

**3 tbsp vegetable oil**

**1 tsp black mustard seeds**

**10-12 curry leaves**

**¼ tsp asafoetida**

**110g finely chopped white onion**

**2 green bird's eye chillies, finely chopped**

**150g tomatoes, finely chopped**

**1 tsp turmeric powder**

**3 tbsp moong dal**

**350g aubergine, cut into cubes**

**Salt**

**1 heaped tsp tamarind paste, or to taste**

**Chopped fresh coriander, to garnish**

**For the spice powder**

**3 tbsp daria dal (AKA split roasted gram)**

**1 tbsp coriander seeds**

**¼ tsp black peppercorn**

**1 dried kashmiri chilli**

Put a small frying pan on a medium heat, add all the spice powder ingredients and toast lightly for three to four minutes, shaking the pan so they colour evenly. Turn off the heat, leave to cool, then grind to a fine powder and set aside.

Put the oil in a large, heavy-based saucepan on a medium heat, add the mustard seeds, curry leaves and asafoetida, and fry for a few seconds. When they start to splutter, add the onion and cook, stirring, for seven to eight minutes, until soft. Stir in the green chillies, then add the tomatoes and cook for six to eight minutes, until they begin to soften. Add the turmeric, moong dal and diced aubergine, and fry,

stirring, for a minute, then pour in 550ml water. Season with salt to taste, then cover and simmer on a low heat for 20 minutes.

Stir in the spice powder, until the mix begins to thicken, then add the tamarind paste and coriander, and simmer for five minutes. Serve warm with rice or soft dosas.