**Ven Pongal**

Prep time: 5 min Cook time: 20 min

**Ingredients:**

* ½ cup rice
* ¼ cup moong dal (split yellow lentils)
* 1 tsp jeera (cumin seeds)
* ⅛ tsp hing (asafoetida)
* 1 tsp ginger, chopped
* 3 cups water
* Low sodium salt, to taste
* ½ tsp black pepper (freshly ground, optional)
* 10–12 curry leaves
* 6–7 cashews, halved
* 1 tbsp ghee (clarified butter)

**Instructions:**

**Roast the Moong Dal:**

1. Heat a small pan or kadai over low to medium heat and add the ¼ cup moong dal.
2. Roast, stirring often, until fragrant and slightly golden. Remove from heat and transfer to a bowl.

**Prepare the Rice and Dal:**

1. In the same bowl, add ½ cup rice to the roasted moong dal.
2. Rinse both the rice and roasted moong dal a couple of times with water, then drain and transfer them to a pressure cooker.

**Cook the Mixture:**

1. Add 1 tsp jeera, ⅛ tsp hing, 1 tsp chopped ginger, and salt to taste.
2. Pour in 3 cups of water and pressure cook on medium to high heat for 7 to 8 whistles.
3. Once the pressure settles down, remove the lid and check if the rice and moong dal are cooked well. They should be soft and well combined. You can slightly mash the mixture with a spoon if you prefer a smoother texture.

**Prepare the Tempering:**

1. In a small pan, heat 1 tbsp ghee over low heat.
2. Add ½ tsp jeera and let it splutter.
3. Add the halved cashews and fry until they turn light golden. Then add ½ tsp black pepper and 10–12 curry leaves. Sauté for a few seconds until fragrant.

**Combine and Serve:**

1. Pour the tempering over the cooked rice and moong dal mixture. Stir gently to combine everything.
2. Serve hot with coconut chutney or pickle on the side, if desired.