**Paneer Karaikudi**

Prep time: 15 min Cook time: 25 min

**Ingredients:**

* 200g paneer (preferably homemade or low-fat), cut into cubes
* 1 tbsp oil (cold-pressed coconut or olive oil)
* 1 tsp mustard seeds
* 1 tsp fennel seeds
* 1 sprig curry leaves
* 1 medium onion, finely chopped
* 2 medium tomatoes, finely chopped
* 1 tsp ginger-garlic paste
* 1 green chili, slit (optional)
* ½ tsp turmeric powder
* 1 tsp red chili powder
* 1½ tsp coriander powder
* 1 tsp garam masala
* ½ tsp black pepper powder
* Low sodium salt, to taste
* ¼ cup water
* 1 tbsp thick curd (for richness)
* 1 tsp lemon juice
* Fresh coriander leaves for garnish

**Instructions:**

**Prep the Paneer:**

1. If using store-bought paneer, soak in warm water for 10 minutes for a softer texture.

**Sauté Spices:**

1. Heat oil in a pan, add mustard seeds and fennel seeds.
2. Once they splutter, add curry leaves and chopped onions.
3. Sauté until onions turn golden.

**Cook the Base:**

1. Add ginger-garlic paste and green chili, sauté until raw smell disappears.
2. Stir in tomatoes and cook until soft.

**Add Spices:**

1. Mix in turmeric, red chili, coriander powder, garam masala, and black pepper powder.
2. Cook for 2 minutes until the masala is well-roasted.

**Simmer the Gravy:**

1. Add water and let the mixture simmer for 5 minutes.
2. Stir in curd for a creamy texture and mix well.

**Add Paneer & Final Touches:**

1. Gently add paneer cubes and coat them in the masala.
2. Simmer for another 3-4 minutes.
3. Squeeze lemon juice and garnish with fresh coriander.

**Serving Suggestions**

1. Serve hot with whole wheat roti, brown rice, or millet dosa for a healthier option.
2. Pair with cucumber raita for a cooling effect.