

BENGALI STYLE BITTER MELON SABJI

Recipe and notes from Swati dasi



Servings: 6

Time: Approx. 1 hour

INGREDIENTS

1 large potato
1 medium eggplant
1 small or medium bitter melon (karela)
1 garnet yam
1 finely chopped large green chili (with seeds removed)
Little finely chopped ginger
1 tsp panch phoron (spice blend)
2 tsp ground cumin
1 ½ tsp turmeric
¼ tsp hing
2 tsp salt (adjust to taste)
½ cup chopped cilantro (dhania patta)
3 cups buttermilk
1/3 cup dal vadis (optional)
Ghee

PREPARATION

1. Cut karela lengthwise, scoop out the seeds and white flesh then cut into small dices. Fry till they are deep golden brown. Drain and set aside.
2. Tip: If you are new to experiencing bitter taste, use a small karela so the bitter flavor will not be so strong.
3. Peel and dice the potato and yam into small cubes, deep fry till soft but crispy on the edges, drain and set aside.
4. Fry vadis and drain (if you are using soy vadis, crush them a little).
5. Peel the eggplant and cut into small chunks.
6. In a heavy bottomed pot, fry the chillies and ginger until chillies are slightly black on the edges, add panch phoron. When mustard seeds pop and turn grey, add the hing and eggplant.

RECIPE CONTINUED

7. Saute fry the eggplant for a minute or two then add turmeric, salt, and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water. Cover and cook on a low flame until the eggplant is very soft, but not mushy.

8. Add the fried karela, potatoes, and yams to the pot, stirring a couple of times while they get hot. Then add the buttermilk. Cook on low flame for 10 mins.

9. Add the cumin powder and cilantro.

10. Sprinkle the dal vadis on the top for a little crunch, or stir in if you want them soft

11. Note: There are three consistencies for sabjis: liquid, moist, and dry. This recipe is a variation on the traditional Bengali dish known as shukta. Shukta is a liquid vegetable preparation, so it should be a little "soupy." Add a little more water if necessary.

12. Tip: This is a sabji that tastes better if the flavors have time to "mature," which can be at least 15 minutes up to $\frac{1}{2}$ hour.

13. Serve with hot rice.

