

Vegan Chickpea Curry Stuffed Eggplants



Ok, so I want to make one thing clear. I am definitely not a vegan and while I respect vegans and what they stand for, I am definitely not becoming a vegan. I did however, want to challenge myself to cook a vegan meal and not just any vegan meal, because that could literally just be a bowl of peas. I wanted to make a beautifully balanced, texturally triumphant and darn tasty plate of food that celebrated everything plant based. Loads of veg, spice, nuts & seeds, legumes, tahini....the list goes on. I am not going to be the judge, I need some Vegans to judge it for me but my total Meatetarian family thought this was an absolute standout!

Prep time: 30 Minutes

Cooking time: 40 Minutes

\$\$ Medium Budget

Serves 4

Extra virgin olive oil

2 large eggplants

3 cloves of garlic

1 red onion, peeled, halved and sliced top to bottom

1 tsp of grated ginger

1tsp each of ground cumin, ground coriander, smoked paprika & chilli flakes

1/2 tsp of turmeric

1 punnet of grape tomatoes (I used a mixture of red and yellow), halved

400gm tin of crushed tomatoes

400gm tin of chickpeas, drained

4 handfuls of chopped kale (about 2/3 of a bag)

Grated rind & juice of 1/2 a lemon

1/2 cup of water

1 tsp of sugar

1/2 a bunch of coriander, roughly chopped

Sea salt & Cracked pepper

1 cup of toasted pepitas, sliced almonds & pine nuts (fabulous to have in the pantry anyway so do a big batch)

8-12 (depending on size) broccolini stems, blanched and chargrilled before serving

Coriander sprigs for garnish

EV olive oil for drizzling

For the Pumpkin Hommus:

700gm of Butternut pumpkin, peel and seeds removed, chopped into pieces

Extra virgin olive oil for drizzling

1 small bulb of garlic, halved with skin and cloves still intact

1 tsp of smoked paprika

Sea salt and pepper

1 tbs of tahini paste (I prefer the unhulled type, I think it has loads more flavour)*

For the Tahini Dressing:

1/2 cup of tahini paste

1 small clove of crushed garlic

Juice of 1/2 a lemon

Sea salt & pepper

1 tbs of honey

1/2 to 1 cup of water

Preheat the oven to 180°C. Place the pumpkin pieces and garlic bulb halves on a lined baking tray and drizzle with a little extra virgin olive oil. Sprinkle with smoked paprika, salt and pepper and toss to coat. Bake in the oven for 25-30 minutes or until golden and tender.

To prepare the eggplant, cut them in half lengthways. Use a small pairing knife to cut gently around the perimeter of each half, about 1/2 a centimetre from the edge, being careful not to pierce the skin. Use your hand or a light slicing motion with your knife to remove the flesh from the centre. It may look a little rough but that is ok, just do your best to remove as much flesh as possible while keeping the skin intact. Brush the halves with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Place them flesh side up on a lined baking tray and bake for 20-25 minutes or until tender.

Take the eggplant flesh and give it a rough chop into cubes. Heat a large frypan and a good lug of olive oil. Fry the eggplant until golden and then remove and set aside for later. In the same frying pan, add a little more oil if needed and fry the red onion until soft before adding the garlic, frying until aromatic. Add the chickpeas, fresh tomatoes and eggplant back to the pan and then sprinkle over your lemon rind and spices. Stir to combine and fry for about a minute before adding the lemon juice, tin tomatoes, water, sugar and seasoning with salt and pepper. Allow the mixture to simmer away gently for about 10-15 minutes before adding the kale and chopped coriander about 5 minutes before serving.

While the curry is cooking, make the Tahini dressing by combining the tahini, honey, garlic, salt, pepper, lemon juice and 1/2 a cup of water. Whisk until smooth, adding a little more water until it is to a consistency that can be drizzled, like a thick dressing running off a spoon.

To complete the hommus, place the pumpkin and tahini in a food processor and add the garlic by squeezing the skin until the flesh pops out. Give it a blitz until you have a nice thick and smooth consistency. Have a taste and adjust the seasoning to your taste.

To plate this delectable Vegan dish, place a large dollop of pumpkin hummus on each plate and use the back of the spoon to spread it in a circular motion. Remove the eggplant from the oven and spoon generous amounts of the chickpea curry in each one. Place them on top of the hummus and give a generous drizzle of the tahini dressing. Scatter over toasted nuts and seeds and serve with grilled broccolini, coriander sprigs and a small drizzle of EV00.

Leftover Tahini? You may like to cook this.....

<https://emsfoodforfriends.com.au/freekeh-lamb-carrot-salad-with-tahini-yoghurt/>

