Sauces / India

Punjabi Kadhi

A tangy, golden yogurt-chickpea-flour curry from Punjab — bhajia fritters simmered in a sour, turmeric-tinted sauce tempered with mustard seed, dried chili, and a final pinch of methi, deeply satisfying and completely vegetarian.

Time 50 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 300 g Full-fat plain yogurt, whisked smooth
- ☐ 600 g Water
- ☐ 10 g Fine salt
- ☐ 4 g Black mustard seeds
- ☐ 80 g Yellow onion, finely sliced
- ☐ 8 g Curry leaves, fresh or dried
- ☐ 80 g Additional chickpea flour (besan, for pakoras)
- ☐ 300 g Neutral oil for frying pakoras
- ☐ 60 g Chickpea flour (besan), sifted
- ☐ 4 g Ground turmeric
- ☐ 30 g Ghee
- ☐ 4 g Cumin seeds
- ☐ 4 g Dried red chilies, whole
- ☐ 4 g Dried fenugreek leaves (kasuri methi)
- ☐ 60 g Small red onion, finely sliced (for pakoras)

Let's make it.

01 In a large, heavy-bottomed pot, whisk together the yogurt, chickpea flour, and water until completely smooth with no lumps of flour remaining. The order matters: whisk the chickpea flour into the yogurt first before adding the water — this prevents lumping, as the yogurt's thickness helps the flour incorporate before being diluted. Add the turmeric and salt. The resulting mixture should be the consistency of very thin batter — opaque, bright yellow, and smelling of raw chickpea flour. Set the pot over medium heat and begin stirring immediately.

02 Cook the kadhi base over medium heat, stirring constantly and vigorously for the first 10 minutes — the yogurt-chickpea mixture is liable to scorch or curdle if left unattended. As it heats, the chickpea flour will begin to thicken the mixture and the yogurt's proteins will be tamed by the starch. Once it reaches a gentle simmer (small bubbles breaking at the surface), reduce to medium-low and cook uncovered for another 15–20 minutes, stirring every 3–4 minutes. The kadhi is ready when it has thickened to the consistency of a light cream sauce and the raw chickpea flour taste has cooked out.

03 Mix the additional chickpea flour with the sliced red onion, a pinch of salt, a pinch of chili powder, and enough water to make a thick batter (about 50 g water) that holds the onion slices together when a clump is dropped. Heat the neutral oil in a deep pan to 175°C / 350°F. Drop spoonfuls of the onion-batter clumps into the oil and fry in batches for 3–4 minutes, turning once, until golden-brown and crispy. Drain on paper towels. These pakoras are added to the kadhi to simmer briefly; making them slightly crispier than you want to eat them standalone ensures they hold their structure after time in the sauce.

04 In a small skillet, heat the ghee over medium-high heat. Add the black mustard seeds and let them pop for 30 seconds. Add the cumin seeds, sliced onion, whole dried chilies, and curry leaves — stand back as the curry leaves will spit dramatically. Fry for 4–5 minutes, stirring, until the onion is golden and the curry leaves are crisp. Remove from heat and crumble in the dried fenugreek leaves (kasuri methi) — they go in off the heat to protect their volatile aromatic compounds from burning. The tadka will hiss and crackle spectacularly when poured into the kadhi.

05 Pour the sizzling tadka over the simmering kadhi, stirring immediately to incorporate the spiced ghee throughout the sauce. Add the pakoras gently, pushing them below the surface so they begin to absorb the kadhi. Simmer together on low heat for 5–7 minutes — just enough time for the pakoras to soften and swell from the sauce without falling apart. Taste and adjust salt; if the sourness is too sharp, add half a teaspoon of sugar. Serve in deep bowls over steamed basmati rice. The kadhi should be generously poured over the rice so the rice can absorb the tangy golden sauce.

Recipe & provenance ForkRecipe Kitchen / ForkRecipe / FoodML and contributors / CC BY-SA 4.0.
Original recipe and attribution CC BY-SA 4.0
Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
recipes.dvs-services.be / kadhi