

Easy-to-prepare meals and accompanying drinks

Tumeric and Pea Daal

BY RACHEL WALKER



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DID YOU KNOW THAT “FLEXITERIANISM” made it into the dictionary last year? It describes the growing number of people who are largely vegetarian, but who won't refuse the odd bacon sandwich. Even the occasional dabble with vegetarianism is good for the planet—and for your pocket. I eat a meat-free daal every Sunday evening. It's comforting, cleansing and cheap: the ideal components for a January recipe.

Use the directions below as a launch pad, and don't be scared to experiment. Lots of daal recipes add a tin of chopped tomatoes to the masala, and I often add mustard seeds and chilli powder as well.

Serves 4

- 750ml water
- 250g red split lentils
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves of garlic, crushed
- 4 inch piece of ginger, grated
- 2 green finger chillies, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp coriander seeds, ground

- 4 black peppercorns, ground
- 150ml water (for the masala)
- 150g frozen peas, cooked according to instructions
- 1/2 lemon, cut into wedges
- Optional serve: chapatis

1. Bring the water to the boil. Thoroughly rinse the lentils under a cold tap and tip them into the water. Put the lid on the pan and allow it to



gently bubble away for 30 minutes. Then leave it to rest with the lid on.

2. Meanwhile, prepare the onion, garlic, ginger and chillies.

3. Heat the oil in a separate pan and cook the onions until softened. Add the garlic, ginger and chillies. Stir in the turmeric, ground coriander and ground peppercorns to create a masala. Pour the 150ml water over the masala and cook for ten minutes.

4. Take the lid off the pan of lentils and use a fork to whisk to a fluffy consistency. Add the masala and the cooked peas to the lentils, and stir until combined. Serve with some lemon wedges and chapatis.

Ideal drink for the dish

■ Blow Horn Cider

The Drink Shop, £2.81

Blow Horn Cider, made by the Cotswold Cider Company, has been developed especially to partner Indian food. The spiced cider is laced with cinnamon, clove and cardamom notes, making it a great accompaniment to a daal or curry. Drink chilled or with ice.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY TIM & ZOE HILL

Vegging Out With A Beer

ON THE SUBJECT OF MEAT-FREE EATING, did you know that some strict vegetarians will refuse certain beers because they contain isinglass, which comes from a sturgeon fish's swim bladder? Once dried and pressed, isinglass is often added to cask ales, where it helps settle and clarify the sediment to create a nice, bright beer.

The Food Standard Agency lists isinglass as an exempt ingredient, so it doesn't need to be listed on labels. This can make things a bit of a minefield, but websites like vegsocapproved.com and barnivore.com have a database of vegan and veggie beers, and lots of companies, such as



Guinness, are very open about their beers containing isinglass. There are also lots of vegetarian-friendly beers making their voices heard.

The Black Sheep Brewery, Black Isle Brewery Co and The Marble Brewery are all safe bets. They do a good line in pale ales, blondes or pilsners, which are all good accompaniments to a daal or curry. Indian-style lagers, Kingfisher and Cobra, are also classic choices—and are vegan-friendly too.

■ **Black Sheep Ale**

The Black Sheep Brewery, £1.99/500ml at Ocado

■ **Black Isle Brewing Co Blonde** £1.80/330ml in their online shop

■ **Cobra** £1.99/660ml at Tesco



FISHY FACTS ABOUT BEER

■ English brewers started adding isinglass to beer in the 16th century, when Dutch traders brought it over from Russia. It's thought that the discovery was first made when medieval brewers used dried bladders as a vessel, and noticed that the beer was much clearer and brighter when poured from a sturgeon's bladder above anything else.

■ Isinglass finings work by attracting the fine yeast particles floating in the beer, until they are so heavy they sink to the bottom—clarifying the beer.



Pudding of the Month



Cheat's Kulfi

Traditional Indian puddings are an acquired taste, even for those with the sweetest tooth. Kulfi is a creamy-dense ice cream, but when delicately flavoured with saffron it makes for a sophisticated end to a meal, with minimal effort.

An authentic kulfi is made in a cone-shaped mould, but it tastes just as good made in a tub. Use crushed pistachios for a traditional topping, though I find that the astringent-saffron flavours are delicious with a spoonful of berry compote.

Serves 4

- 300ml full-fat milk
- 1 generous pinch of saffron
- 397g tin condensed milk
- Optional serve: crushed pistachio nuts

1. Heat the milk in a pan and add the saffron.
2. When the milk is near-simmering, stir in the condensed milk.
3. Pour into four moulds or dishes and freeze. ■

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BOOK



Deliciously Ella by Ella Woodward, £13.60
100 sugar-, gluten- and dairy-free recipes.

BARGAIN



Waitrose Cooks' Ingredient Organic Ground Turmeric, £1.69/50g

BLOW-OUT



MasterChef Travel India Trip A ten-day long gastronomic tour round Kerala, from £1,995pp.