

folk

CAFÉ

* RECIPE *

Smoked Aubergine Curry

One of my favourite vegetables to work with is aubergine. I love how diverse it is. Hot, cold, fried, smoked, braai, grilled, it just does so much. So, when I came across the gas hob technique to smoke my aubergine I just had to try it. It's a little messy but it's worth it. After a few different applications, this is my favourite. My smoked aubergine Rogan josh, it's simply delicious and a real crowd pleaser but relatively easy to make.

INGREDIENTS - Spice mix

- 4 tsp. garam masala powder
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1/2 tsp ground black pepper
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 3 cardamom pods (or 4 tsp ground cardamom)

INGREDIENTS – Curry sauce

- 3 tbsp tomato paste
- hot chilli powder or fresh chilli – you choose how much
- 3 tbsp vegetable oil
 - 750g aubergines
 - 1 stick cinnamon
 - 1 large brown onion, chopped
 - 2 cloves garlic, crushed
 - 5cm piece of ginger, peeled and grated
 - 200 ml natural yoghurt
 - Small handful fresh coriander, stalks for cooking, leaves for garnish

DIRECTIONS

1. Smoke the aubergines

Rinse but don't cut the aubergines. To smoke them you'll need an open flame. I used the gas plate on the hob. Holding the aubergine with a pair of tongs above the flame (much like roasting a marshmallow), rotate the aubergine slowly and evenly. You will start to notice that the skin begins to char slightly and separates from the flesh. A few darker spots add to the smoky flavour so don't worry about those. Once the skin has all separated set aside to peel. Wait till they have cooled off before peeling back the skin and exposing the fleshy inside. Peeling can be a bit messy but simply rinse off any bits and the hard part is done!

Discard the skin and dice your aubergines (which should be tender at this point) into bite size cubes and set aside

2. Combine the ingredients for the spice mix and set aside

3. Heat the oil in a deep pan or pot and fry the cinnamon and onion until the onion is soft and translucent

4. Add the garlic, chopped coriander stalks and ginger and fry for 2mins. Add the spice mix and fry for another minute until the spices are fragrant.

5. Add the aubergine, tomato paste and fresh chilli, gently stirring to coat in spice mix. Add the whole peeled tomatoes and gently simmer for 15 minutes, stirring occasionally.

6. Discard the cinnamon and stir through the yoghurt, cooking for a further 10 mins.

7. Serve with fresh *tomato & red onion sambals and naan or spiced rice

8. Garnish with freshly chopped coriander when serving.

Tricks and cheats

- Rogan josh spice premix or paste will work just as well
- Garam masala - available at Folk café or mix your own with cloves, cinnamon, cardamoms, cumin, coriander, nutmeg, bay leaf and black pepper
- For a meatier option use chicken or lamb. You'll need to brown your meat as the first step and set aside. Then add as you would have added the aubergine
- No tin tomatoes? Substitute with 6-8 fresh ones quartered along with 100ml veg stock

*Tomato & red onion sambal

In a bowl combine:

2 handfuls of mixed colour and variety tomatoes finely chopped

½ red onion finely diced

1/3 cucumber peeled and chopped into cubes

5 stalks Fresh Chopped coriander leaves

Juice of ½ a lemon squeezed over the top

3 tsp olive or sesame oil

Toss and serve with curry