

Butter chicken

Serves 10

2 lb (1 kg) chicken thigh fillets
¼ cup (2 fl oz/60 ml) white vinegar
 or lemon juice
⅓ cup coriander seeds
1 cinnamon stick, about 2 inches
(5 cm) long, broken into small
pieces
5 brown or black cardamom pods
10 green cardamom pods
1 teaspoon whole cloves
3 teaspoons ground turmeric
2 teaspoons chili powder
2 teaspoons paprika
1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon ground mace
¼ cup (2 oz/60 g) plain (natural)
whole-milk yogurt
2½ tablespoons crushed garlic
2½ tablespoons grated fresh ginger
2½ tablespoons vegetable oil
salt to taste

Cut chicken fillets into quarters. In a glass or ceramic bowl, combine chicken with 4 teaspoons vinegar, and turn to coat. Set aside.

In a spice grinder, grind coriander seeds, cinnamon, cardamom and cloves to a powder. Place in a bowl and combine with turmeric, chili powder, paprika, nutmeg, mace, remaining vinegar, yogurt, garlic, ginger and oil, and mix well. Season with salt and add to chicken. Mix well, cover, and place in the refrigerator to marinate for 30 minutes.

Preheat oven to 475°F (240°C/Gas 9). Oil a shallow roasting pan and place chicken pieces in pan in a single layer. Bake, without turning, for 12 minutes.

SAUCE

½ cup (4 fl oz/125 ml) vegetable oil
and melted unsalted butter combined
2 lb (1 kg) yellow (brown) onions, about
6 medium, chopped
1 teaspoon salt, plus extra to taste
2½ tablespoons grated fresh ginger
2½ tablespoons crushed garlic
2 teaspoons chili powder
3 teaspoons ground turmeric
2 teaspoons chopped fresh green chili
peppers
2 lb (1 kg) tomatoes, about 7 medium,
chopped and pureed in a blender
or food processor
⅔ cup (5 fl oz/150 ml) heavy (double)
cream
¼ cup (2 oz/60 g) unsalted butter
4 teaspoons honey
2 tablespoons dried fenugreek leaves
⅓ cup (½ oz/15 g) chopped cilantro
(fresh coriander)

Remove from oven and set aside.

To make sauce: In a degchi or large frying pan, heat oil and butter mixture over medium–low heat. Add onions and 1 teaspoon salt and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until onions are dark golden brown, 15–20 minutes. Add ginger and garlic and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Add chili powder, turmeric and chili pepper, and cook for 1 minute. Add tomatoes and cook, uncovered, stirring often, until tomatoes are soft, 5–10 minutes.

Add cream and butter to pan and cook, stirring, until butter melts. Stir in chicken, honey and fenugreek, and cook, stirring often, until chicken is cooked through, about 5 minutes. Stir in cilantro. Taste and add salt if necessary. Serve immediately.

