

Slow Cooker Chicken Tikka Masala



Preparation time: 30 min

Difficulty: Easy

Ingredients

- chicken breasts skinless boneless: 2 pounds
- garam masala: 1.5 teaspoon
- garlic minced: 1 tablespoon
- ginger grated: 1 tablespoon
- ground turmeric: 1/2 teaspoon
- kashmiri red chili powder: 1 tablespoon
- kosher salt: 2.5 teaspoons
- lemon juice: 1 tablespoon
- medium yellow onions finely diced: 2
- oil: 2 tablespoons
- plain yogurt: 3 tablespoons
- tomato puree: 1.5 cups

For this recipe we used:

Strained Tomatoes 1.5 cups



Preparation

Tender chicken marinated in aromatic spices is slow cooked in a delicious tomato-based curry for the best Indian meal.

Before we get started with the recipe, let me explain the ingredients I like to use and the reasons why!

Ingredients for marinade:

1. Chicken – Boneless, skinless chicken breasts cut into 2 to 3 inch cubes. The 2 to 3 inch cubes allows the chicken to cook perfectly without making it so soft that it starts to shred.
2. Yogurt – Preferably plain full fat yogurt. In a pinch, you can also use greek or low fat yogurt.
3. Lemon – I like to use fresh lemon juice but bottled one works too.
4. Ginger & Garlic – Freshly grated ginger and finely minced garlic.
5. Kashmiri Red Chili Powder – I really love this mild and vibrant chili powder that adds a nice orange hue to the curry. Read more about Kashmiri Chili in my [Indian Spice Guide](#). If you are using different chili powder please adjust the quantity accordingly. You can always add more chili powder in the end after tasting the curry.
6. Garam Masala – I use my homemade [easy 5-ingredient garam masala](#) but feel free to use the one you like. I truly believe that fresh and flavorful garam masala really makes this dish, so if you haven't already; please check out my easy recipe.

Sauce Ingredients:

1. Onions – Finely diced yellow onions work best in this recipe. For this slow cooker recipe, I highly recommend sauteeing them with some oil for 5 minutes or until they become soft and translucent. This adds a subtle sweetness to the dish and eliminates the chance of crunchy onions in the final dish.
2. Tomato Puree – I LOVE [Pomi Strained tomatoes](#) in this recipe. The puree is made with 100% fresh Italian tomatoes and adds a burst of flavor to any dish. It comes in a convenient glass bottle and does not need any refrigeration until opened. Pomi products are super handy especially when fresh tomatoes are not in season.

Instructions

1. Cut the chicken breasts into 2 to 3-inch cubes. Add 2 teaspoon salt and lemon juice and mix well. Add yogurt, red chili powder, turmeric, garam masala, ginger, and garlic. Mix well and allow to marinate while you prep the remaining ingredients.
2. Heat oil a medium pan. Add onions and 1/2 teaspoon of salt. Cook over medium heat for 5 minutes stirring frequently until the onions start to soften and turn translucent. Note: If you are using Instant Pot as a slow cooker, you can saute in the instant pot itself.
3. Add the cooked onions to the crockpot / slow cooker and spread it evenly. Evenly layer tomato puree over the onions. Line the marinated chicken over the tomato puree. Place the crockpot lid and set the cooking time to Slow Cook (Hi) and adjust the cook time to 4 hours.
4. After 4 hours, your kitchen will be filled with the beautiful aromas of the curry. Add heavy cream, crush the fenugreek leaves on the palm of your hands and add to the curry. Mix well, taste and add tomato paste. Mix well and more cream if needed. Note: Optionally you can add 1 teaspoon of sugar to balance all the flavors. Garnish with cilantro and enjoy with basmati rice and naan.

Notes:

1. To make chicken tikka masala without cream or dairy-free, you can either use unsweetened coconut cream (I love Trader Joe's) or homemade cashew cream. To make the cashew cream at home simply blend 1/2 cup of cashews in half cup of warm water and make a smooth paste.
2. I have tested this recipe using a [Crockpot slow cooker](#), [Instant Pot](#) slow cooker function and [Instant Pot AURA Multi Cooker](#). The advantage with the Instant Pot models is that you can saute the onions in the same pot. With a crockpot slow cooker, you saute the onions in a separate pan on the stovetop.
3. If you do not have a good brand of tomato puree like the Pomi one, you can puree 3 fresh tomatoes in a blender and use that instead.

I like to use chicken breasts in this recipe, but you can also use chicken thighs, simply cut each thigh into 2 pieces.