



loch lomond shores

Sukí's Amrítсарí Murgh

Bold, rich, and unapologetically Punjabi!

The ultimate chicken curry straight from the heart of Punjab.

Introduction:

My maternal grandparents lived in Kapurthala, Punjab in India during the 1980s and as a child, I vividly remember our summer vacations there. Those trips always included a visit to Amritsar, a city that holds a special place in my heart. Amritsar is known for its iconic Golden Temple, a spiritual haven with its glistening gold façade and serenity.

The city's vibrant charm is its bustling markets like Hall Bazaar and Lahori Gate, where the cacophony of sounds mingles with the tantalizing aromas of street food. From the soulful kirtan resonating across the temple complex, to the vibrant bazaars brimming with phulkari scarves, juttis shoes, rolls of colourful cloth for making turbans and vibrant spices, every corner of Amritsar tells a story. These memories come alive every time I close my eyes and think of the taxi ride through the city, a city that is the perfect blend of Sikh spirituality and Punjabi culture.

Amritsar also stands out with its iconic street food culture—kulchas flatbreads straight from the tandoor, yoghurt lassi with cream served in earthen tumblers, and, of course, the famed Amritsari fish and chicken. Amritsari Chicken is my ode to this vibrant land, a tribute to my heritage, and a dish that I carried with me to England after marriage for it carries the flavours of my childhood.

The magic portion in this recipe is the spice powder can be said not be the spice mix which is beautifully fragrant!



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Ingredients

For the chicken marination:

- 600g of chicken breast fillet, cut into slightly bigger bite-size pieces
- Juice of ½ a lemon
- 1 tbsp ginger garlic paste
- ½ tsp turmeric powder
- 1 tsp coriander seeds, dry roasted & pounded
- ½ tsp dried pomegranate powder
- 2 tbsp Greek yogurt
- 1 tbsp neutral oil or butter
- ½ tsp salt

For the Amritsari Spice mix:

- 1 brown cardamom pod
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- ¼ tsp Fenugreek seeds
- 3 green Cardamom pods
- 1-2 red chillis
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- ½ tsp mustard seeds





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Ingredients

For the Chicken Curry:

- 4 tbsp oil
- 1 tbsp butter, solid cube
- 1 inch ginger, chopped finely
- 6-7 cloves of garlic, chopped
- 1-2 Fresh mild green chillies, chopped (optional)
- 2 bay leaf
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 3 medium white onions chopped
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp Kashmiri red chilli powder (optional)
- 2 fresh tomatoes, chopped or 200g of tinned tomatoes
- 1 tbsp Greek yoghurt or double cream
- Salt as per taste
- 1 teaspoon dried fenugreek leaves
- 1 teaspoon garam masala for garnish
- Few fresh coriander leaves for garnish



Method

For the Chicken Marination:

Take a bowl and add all the ingredients listed under the heading 'For chicken marination.' Mix well and keep in the fridge for minimum 1 hour.

While the chicken marinates, make the Amritsari spice mix. Dry roast the spices for a minute or two, and once cooled, grind into a smooth powder. Yields approx. 5 teaspoons.

Heat oil and butter in a pan and add the chopped ginger. Once it changes colour, add the marinated chicken on high heat and fry on both sides for two minutes until the outer covering is slightly browned, followed by lowering the heat, covering the pan with a lid, and cooking the chicken thoroughly. This can take up to 10 minutes or so. Remove the pieces and keep aside.

In the same pan, add rest of the oil and butter, add cumin seeds and bay leaf and once the seeds sizzle, add chopped garlic and chilli.

Once the garlic becomes translucent, which can take a minute or so, add the chopped onions. Now cook the onions until they are a rich dark shade of brown. The entire cooking process can take up to 12 minutes on medium heat. Please don't burn them! Stir frequently.



Method (Cont'd)

Once the desired colour is achieved, lower the heat, add two teaspoons of the Amritsari spice mix, turmeric powder, and Kashmiri red chilli powder.

Fry well with a tablespoon or two of water. The water aids in stabilizing the frying process by controlling the heat.



Add the chopped tomato. Cook the tomato on medium heat until it is mushy, and you can see oil on the sides of the pan. Look out for the mixture getting a deeper hue of red.

Now, add the double cream or yogurt on low heat and mix well.

Add 150 ml of warm water and let the mixture simmer. Add the cooked chicken pieces back and mix well. Let the chicken be coated in the sauce for a few minutes. Add the dried fenugreek leaves too at this stage. Cook for a couple of minutes on medium heat, and you will see oil on the surface of the pan. Switch off the burner.

Garnish with garam masala and coriander leaves!

Note: In case you are struggling with a particular spice like dried pomegranate powder or brown cardamom pod, you may omit it as the spice mix has plenty of flavoursome spices!

Goes best with: Paneer and peppers or potatoes Katli dish, garlic naan, cucumber raita yoghurt and any onion salad!