

DESHI MIX
BY SALINA PARVIN



Chickpea surprises

If you were to select one quintessential iftar dish, hands down chickpea will be it. No iftar meal is ever complete without it, and it is not only in Bangladesh but also across the entire globe that this legume enjoys soaring popularity. Also known as garbanzo beans, chickpeas are an essential ingredient in Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and of course Indian cuisines.

So what makes this a superfood? One of the eight founder crops, chickpea is high in nutritive value — 1 cup serving has only 4 grams of total fat; it has low cholesterol and sodium levels. It is also a good source of dietary fibre, protein, copper, folate, manganese, iron, phosphorus, zinc and whole lot of vitamins.

WAYS IN WHICH CHICKPEA BENEFITS THE BODY

Helps control blood sugar levels.

Increases satiety and helps with weight loss.

Improves digestion due to a high fibre content.

Helps protect against heart disease and cancer.

Provides essential vitamins and minerals.

Great source of plant-based protein.

SOME CHICKPEA BASICS

There are primarily two variants of chickpeas available in the market. The 'deshi' ones (also known as brown chickpeas); and the kabuli one (also known as the white chickpea). The local variant contains smaller, darker seeds and has more of a rough coat. Kabuli is a larger, lighter coloured bean with a smoother coat.

If you prefer to use dried chickpea remember to soak them in water for 24 hours before cooking. Keep in mind that one cup of raw chickpeas gives about two and a half cups of soaked/boiled chickpeas.

To speed up the soaking process, add a teaspoon of bicarbonate to the water, but bear in mind that this may impart a bitter flavour to the chickpeas. Depending on the recipe, the cooking time for the chickpea will vary between half an hour to two hours. Using a pressure cooker with significantly reduce the cooking time.



CHICKPEAS AND MINT RICE

An all-rounder that contains cereals, pulses, veggies, and oil, chickpea and mint rice is a satiating one-dish meal. All you need is to serve this quick and easy rice with a bowl of calcium-rich, low-fat curds to make a balanced and complete dish.

Ingredients

- 1 cup soaked and boiled chickpeas
- ¼ cup finely chopped mint leaves
- 2 cups soaked and cooked rice
- 1 tsp finely chopped garlic
- ½ cup thinly sliced onions
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ cup chopped and boiled mixed vegetables (French beans, carrots and green peas)
- 1 tsp green chilli paste
- ½ tsp lemon juice
- 1 tbsp oil

Salt to taste

Low-fat curd

Method

Heat oil in a broad non-stick pan. Add garlic, onions and bay leaves. Sauté on medium flame till the onion turns brown. Add rice, chickpeas, mixed vegetables and salt. Mix well and cook on medium flame for 2 minutes. Add green chilli paste, mint leaves and lemon juice, mix well and cook for another minute. Serve hot with low-fat curds.

Nutrient value per serving

Energy- 150 calories, protein- 4.3 g, carbohydrates- 27.8 gm, fat- 2.5 gm, fibre-1.2 gm, iron- 2.6 mg

BAKED CHICKPEA PARCELS

This is a delicious, easy to serve 'snack-like' dish. A spicy tangy chickpea preparation is placed inside a plain flour dough leavened with yeast, and baked in an oven. Somewhat like a chickpea stuffed bun, these baked chickpea parcels have a fluffy texture with a scrumptious filling.

You must prepare the chickpea 1-3 hours in advance and allow it to cool before stuffing into the dough, in order to get the right texture.

Ingredients

For the dough —

- 2 cups plain flour
- 1 tbsp instant dry yeast
- ½ tsp sugar
- Salt to taste
- ¼ cup melted butter

For the chickpeas —

- 2 cups white chickpeas
- 2 tbsp oil
- 2 cloves
- 2 small cinnamon sticks
- 2 bay leaves

¼ tsp cumin seeds

½ cup finely chopped onions

1 tsp ginger-garlic paste

1 tsp finely chopped green chillies

½ cup finely chopped tomatoes

½ tsp turmeric powder

1 tsp chaat masala

1 tsp coriander powder

Salt to taste

Other ingredients —

Plain flour for rolling

Butter for brushing

Method

Combine yeast, sugar and ¼ cup of warm water in a small bowl and mix well. Cover it and keep aside for 10 minutes. Combine plain flour, salt and yeast-sugar mixture in a deep bowl, mix well and knead into soft dough, using warm water as required.

Add butter and knead well till smooth. Cover the dough with a wet muslin cloth and leave them for 45 minutes. Knead the dough again to remove the excess air and keep aside. Heat oil in a deep pan, add cloves, cinnamon, bay leaves, cumin seeds and onions. Sauté on medium flame for 6 minutes.

Add the ginger-garlic paste, green chillies, and tomatoes; mix well and cook on medium flame for 5 minutes. Add turmeric powder, chaat masala, coriander powder and salt, mix well and cook for few minutes. Add boiled chickpeas and cook for 5 minutes, mashing it lightly with the back of a spoon, while stirring occasionally.

Divide the mixture into 8 equal portions. Now divide the dough into 16 equal portions and roll 2 portions of the dough into a 75mm (3") diameter circle using a little plain flour for rolling.

