

Tarka dal (yellow lentils with tempered spices)

The everyday hero of north Indian home cooking: split yellow lentils slow-simmered to silk, then finished with a hot ghee or oil tempering of garlic, cumin and chilli. Naturally vegan when made with oil.

Prep: 10 min **Cook:** 40 min **Total:** 50 min **Serves:** 4 servings **Spice:** Mild

INGREDIENTS

- 250g yellow split lentils (toor or moong dal)
- 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 tsp salt
- 1.2L water
- For the tarka:
- 3 tbsp ghee or vegetable oil
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 4 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 tomato, finely chopped
- 1 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder
- 1/2 tsp asafoetida (hing) — skip for gluten-free
- Fresh coriander to finish

METHOD

1. Rinse the dal under cold water until it runs clear.
2. Bring water, dal, turmeric and salt to a boil, then simmer 35 minutes, stirring occasionally, until creamy.
3. Whisk the cooked dal briefly to break it down further; add more hot water for a looser texture if needed.
4. Heat ghee in a small pan for the tarka; add cumin and let it crackle.
5. Add garlic; cook 30 seconds until just golden — do not burn.
6. Add onion; cook 4 minutes until soft.
7. Add tomato, Kashmiri chilli and asafoetida; cook 2 minutes until the oil rises.
8. Pour the hot tarka over the dal, stir once, top with coriander and serve with rice or roti.

CHEF'S TIPS

- Whisk the dal halfway through cooking — it makes a noticeably silkier texture.
- Use Kashmiri chilli for colour without heat, or a hot deggi chilli for kick.
- The tarka must be hot enough to sizzle on contact — that is the whole flavour of the dish.

ALLERGENS

Contains: Dairy (ghee — optional)

Free from: Egg, Soy, Peanut, Tree nuts, Shellfish

- Vegan: Use vegetable oil in place of ghee.
- Gluten-free: Omit asafoetida (hing), or use a certified gluten-free brand — most commercial hing contains wheat starch.

TOO BUSY TO COOK?

We cook this in our Richmond kitchen every evening from 4pm. Order collection or delivery at jaflongtandoori.online, or call 020 8332 1339. Catering for 10 to 200 guests: jaflongtandoori.online/catering/hub