

# Add a Little Spice to Your Life!

## Grab & Go Spice Kits for Adults: Garam Masala

Do you love to cook? Do you like to try new flavors and recipes? Or maybe you are in a cooking rut and don't know how to start expanding your cooking repertoire. Let us help you get spicy in the kitchen. Your kit includes a pre-measured packet of garam masala and a few recipes.

**What is garam masala?** Garam masala is a popular spice blend used throughout India. The word garam means "hot" while masala means "spices" but those words aren't meant to imply that garam masala is always spicy. In Ayurvedic medicine, the spices in garam masala are considered warming meaning they increase the metabolism rather than being hot in flavor. As with many spice blends, the exact spices included in garam masala vary by region and even by household. The most common spices included in the blend are cumin, coriander, cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, black peppercorns, nutmeg, and mace. Other popular add-ins include bay leaves, fennel seeds, mustard seeds, turmeric, and dried red chiles. In northern India, garam masala is heavy with black peppercorns. Garam masala tends to get spicier with the addition of dry red chiles in southern India.

**Easy ways to add garam masala to your diet.** Garam masala adds warmth, sweetness, floral notes, and a touch of heat from the black pepper. It is intended to be a fragrant spice as well as a flavorful one. It can be sprinkled over dishes, like pureed soups or fresh popped popcorn, just before serving to enhance the flavors and add a touch of warmth. Try baking with garam masala by swapping it into any recipe that calls for pumpkin pie spice. Make masala eggs by whisking in a pinch or two just before you scrambled the eggs. Before roasting, add a few generous pinches to any root vegetable such as carrots, parsnips or sweet potatoes. Garam masala can be used as a rub for meat, poultry, and fish. Mix the spice blend with a little oil or yogurt and massage it into the meat. Let it marinate for at least 30 minutes before cooking.

### Recipes featuring Garam Masala:

- *Sheet-Pan Chicken Tikka Thighs*
- *Slow-Cooker Butter Chicken*
- *Cauliflower and Tomato Masala with Peas*
- *Chana Masala*
- *Peas with Garam Masala*

### Need more inspiration?

You can watch a six-part Great Courses class called *The Everyday Gourmet: Essential Secrets of Spices in Cooking* for free with your library card by using a [Hoopla Great Courses BingePass](#) or streaming on [Kanopy](#).

# Sheet-Pan Chicken Tikka Thighs

By Zainab Shah

Yield: 4 servings

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons full-fat Greek or Indian yogurt
- 1 teaspoon ginger paste or freshly grated ginger
- 1 teaspoon garlic paste or freshly grated garlic
- 1½ teaspoons Kashmiri red chile powder
- 1½ teaspoons garam masala
- 1½ teaspoons ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- Salt
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 2 large bell peppers, chopped into 1-inch pieces
- 1 red onion, chopped into 1-inch pieces
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- Cooked rice, for serving (optional)

## PREPARATION

1. In a large bowl, stir together the yogurt, ginger, garlic, chile powder, garam masala, ground cumin, turmeric, 1 teaspoon salt and 1 tablespoon oil. Add the chicken and stir until the thighs are completely coated. Using a fork, thoroughly stab the chicken thighs so the marinade may penetrate the meat. Set aside for 30 minutes or cover and refrigerate overnight to marinate.
2. On a medium sheet pan, about 13- by 9-inches, toss the bell peppers and onion with the cumin seeds and the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and ½ teaspoon salt. Lay the ingredients out in a single layer. Using a fork, hold up a chicken thigh over the bowl and scrape the excess marinade off with another fork, and lay it on the vegetables. Repeat the process for the remaining thighs.

3. Turn the broiler on high. Place the sheet pan on a rack about 3 inches below the broiler. Broil for 7 to 10 minutes. Flip the thighs and broil for another 7 to 10 minutes, until parts of the chicken and vegetables are charred and crisp on the outside and chicken is cooked through (when a thermometer inserted into thickest part of a thigh reads 165 degrees). Serve with rice or as is, spooning the juices from the sheet pan over the chicken as sauce.

# Slow-Cooker Butter Chicken

By Jennifer Steinhauer

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 tablespoons grated ginger
- 1 tablespoon garam masala
- 16-ounce can tomato paste
- $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon kosher salt
- 3 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breasts, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 teaspoon lime zest
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 1 cup coconut milk (if necessary, whisk to combine the liquid and solids before measuring)
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chicken stock
- $\frac{1}{4}$  cup cilantro leaves, for garnish (optional)
- Cooked basmati or jasmine rice, for serving
- Naan, for serving (optional)

## PREPARATION

1. In a medium skillet, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onions to skillet, and cook until softened, about 3 minutes. Reduce heat to medium, add garlic and ginger, and cook for another 2 minutes. Add garam masala, tomato paste and salt; cook and stir for 2 minutes.
2. Place chicken pieces in a slow cooker, then add tomato paste mixture, lime zest and juice, coconut milk and chicken stock. Stir everything together, cover and cook on low heat for 4½ to 5 hours, until the chicken is cooked through. (You may let it cook for up to 7 hours if necessary, but the chicken may be very soft and shredded.) Garnish with

cilantro and serve with basmati or jasmine rice, and naan if you have some.

# Cauliflower and Tomato Masala with Peas

By Deb Perelman

Yield: 4 servings

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 large head cauliflower (3 pounds)
- 2 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 tablespoon finely grated fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon finely grated garlic (about 2 cloves)
- 1 jalapeño or another green chile, finely chopped (use more or less to taste)
- 1 big handful fresh cilantro, stems finely chopped, leaves roughly torn
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/4 to 1 teaspoon mild red chili powder (I used kashmiri), adjusted to taste
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon garam masala
- 2 to 3 cups tomato puree from a 28-ounce can
- 1 to 2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1 cup water
- 1 1/2 cup green peas, frozen is fine
- 1/2 teaspoon amchur (dried mango) powder or juice of half a lemon
- Rice or flatbreads, to serve

## PREPARATION

1. First, prepare your cauliflower, just to get it out of the way. Trim the leaves. Remove the large core and dice it into small (1/4 to 1/2-inch) pieces. Cut or break the florets into medium-sized chunks.
2. In a large, deep sauté pan, heat oil over medium heat. Once hot, add cumin seeds, ginger, garlic, and jalapeño and cook together for 3 minutes, until tender but the garlic and ginger are not browned.
3. Add diced cauliflower core and finely chopped cilantro stems (save leaves for the end) and cook for another 1 minute together. Add turmeric, chili powder, coriander, and garam masala and cook for 2

minutes. Add 2 to 3 cups tomato puree — use the smaller amount if your cauliflower clocks in in the 2 to 2.5-pound range, or if you're not sure you want dish as saucy as mine is, plus salt (1 1/2 teaspoons was just right for my 3 cups puree), and water and bring to a simmer, cook for 5 minutes. Add cauliflower and stir to coat with sauce.

4. Cover with a lid and cook for about 20 minutes, until cauliflower is tender but not mushy, stirring occasionally. Add peas (still frozen are fine) and cook for 5 to 10 minutes, until heated through. Add amchur powder or lemon juice and stir to warm through. Taste the dish for seasoning and adjust to taste. Finish with cilantro leaves. Serve with rice or flatbread.

# Chana Masala

By Jeanine Donofrio

Yield: 4 servings

## INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon garam masala
- ½ teaspoon ground coriander
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric
- ¼ teaspoon ground cardamom
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- ½ teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- Heaping 1 teaspoon sea salt
- ½ cup water
- 1 (28-ounce) can whole peeled tomatoes
- 3 cups cooked chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- ½ cup chopped fresh cilantro, plus more for serving
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice, plus more for serving
- Cooked brown rice or white rice, for serving
- Whole milk Greek yogurt, for serving

## PREPARATION

1. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 8 minutes, stirring often, or until soft and well browned.
2. Reduce the heat to medium-low and add the cumin seeds, garam masala, coriander, turmeric, cardamom, and a pinch of cayenne. Stir and cook for 30 seconds, or until fragrant. Stir in the garlic, ginger, salt, and ¼ cup of the water.



3. Add the tomatoes, breaking them apart with your hands as you add them or crushing them with a wooden spoon in the skillet. Bring to a simmer and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, or until the sauce thickens. Add the chickpeas and the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup water, stir, and simmer for 20 to 25 minutes, stirring occasionally, or until thick. Stir in the cilantro and lemon juice.
4. Serve over rice with dollops of Greek yogurt, more cilantro, and more lemon juice, if desired.

# Peas with Garam Masala

By Amanda Hesser

Yield: 4 servings

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- ½ medium onion, chopped
- ½ teaspoon garam masala
- 4 cups frozen small peas
- ½ cup whole-milk yogurt, preferably sheep's milk
- Salt to taste

## PREPARATION

1. Pour the oil into a medium saucepan and place over medium-high heat. When it shimmers, add the onion and garam masala and saute until the onion is translucent but not browned, about 5 minutes.
2. Pour in the peas and cook, stirring, until the peas are warmed through. Remove from heat, fold in the yogurt and season with salt.