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**Opening Extract from...**

# Curry Easy

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**Salmon in a Bengali Mustard Sauce** Eat this with plain rice and make the sauce as hot as you like. In Bengal the mustard seeds are ground at home, but to make matters simpler I have used shop-bought mustard powder. Halibut may be used instead of salmon. This very traditional dish is best served with Plain Basmati Rice and My Everyday Moong Dal (see pages 201 and 192) plus a green vegetable **Serves 2-3**

340 g/12 oz skinless salmon fillet  
salt  
ground turmeric  
cayenne pepper  
1 tablespoon mustard powder  
2 tablespoons mustard oil or extra virgin olive oil  
¼ teaspoon whole brown mustard seeds  
¼ teaspoon whole cumin seeds  
¼ teaspoon whole fennel seeds  
2 fresh, hot green chillies (bird's eye are best), partially slit

Cut the fish into pieces about 2.5 x 5 cm/1 x 2 inches and rub them evenly with ¼ teaspoon salt, ¼ teaspoon ground turmeric and ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper. Cover and set aside in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes or up to 8 hours.

Put the mustard powder in a small bowl with ¼–½ teaspoon cayenne pepper, ¼ teaspoon turmeric and ¼ teaspoon salt. Add 1 tablespoon water and mix to a paste. Add another 7 tablespoons water and mix. Set aside.

Put the oil in a medium frying pan and set over a medium-high heat. When hot, put in the mustard seeds. As soon as they start to pop, a matter of seconds, add the cumin and fennel seeds. Stir once and quickly pour in the mustard paste. Add the chillies, stir and bring to a gentle simmer.

Place the fish pieces in the sauce in a single layer. Simmer gently for about 5 minutes, or until the fish is just cooked through, turning the fish over once and spooning the sauce over it all the time.





**Chicken with Apricots** The Parsi community of India is of Persian descent. When the Parsis fled Iran in the 10th century, they settled on India's west coast, where they managed to preserve not only their religious traditions – they are Zoroastrians – but many of their culinary traditions as well. This delicately sweet-and-sour dish of chicken cooked with dried apricots is one of them. However, Parsis gradually picked up customs from their Gujarati neighbours, and their 19th-century colonial masters, the British, in Bombay. I have a Parsi friend who puts in a healthy glug of Madeira towards the end of the cooking. This dish is generally served with a mountain of very fine, crisp potato straws but it may also be served with rice **Serves 4**

1.25 kg/2½ lb chicken pieces  
(1 use 8 thighs or drumsticks,  
or a mixture of the two, but  
a cut-up chicken would be  
fine)

salt and freshly ground black  
pepper

12 dried apricots, preferably  
the orange Turkish ones

3 tablespoons olive or  
rapeseed oil

2 cinnamon sticks

½ teaspoon whole cumin seeds

2 medium onions, peeled and  
cut into fine half-rings

3 teaspoons peeled and finely  
grated fresh ginger

1 tablespoon tomato purée

1½ tablespoons granulated  
sugar

2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

1 teaspoon garam masala,  
preferably home-made (see  
page 248), but shop-bought  
will do

½–¾ teaspoon cayenne pepper

Sprinkle the chicken on all sides with ½ teaspoon salt and generous amounts of black pepper. Pat in and set aside.

Put the apricots in a small pan with 250 ml/8 fl oz water and bring to the boil. Lower the heat and gently simmer for 15 minutes, or until the apricots have softened but are firm enough to be cooked again later. Leave in their liquid.

Put the oil in a large frying pan or sauté pan and set over a medium–high heat. When hot, put in the cinnamon sticks and cumin. Ten seconds later, put in half the chicken pieces and brown them on all sides. Transfer to a bowl. Cook the remaining chicken in the same way. Add to the bowl.

Add the onions to the pan. Stir and fry until they brown at the edges. Add the ginger and stir for a few seconds. Add the tomato purée and stir once. Now return the chicken and all the accumulated juices to the pan, along with 350 ml/12 fl oz water and 1 teaspoon salt. Cover and bring to the boil. Lower the heat and cook gently for 15 minutes, turning the chicken once during this time.

Remove the cover and add the sugar, vinegar, apricots and their cooking liquid, garam masala and cayenne pepper. Stir and cook over a high heat until the sauce is a bit syrupy.





**Turkey Chappali Kebabs** Chappali kebabs, popular throughout much of Pakistan but originating near its borders with Afghanistan, are actually beef patties (rather than skewered meat) shallow-fried in the fat rendered from the tail of a fat-tailed sheep. If you can imagine a juicy, spicy hamburger cooked in roast beef dripping, you get the general idea: delicious but iffy on the health front. Over the years, I have come up with my own version, using turkey meat.

I serve these kebabs with Thin Raw Onion Rings and Peshawari Red Pepper Chutney (see pages 236 and 238). You may even put this kebab in a hamburger bun, along with the onion rings and either a good squirt of lemon juice or some tomato ketchup **Makes 6 kebabs**

2 tablespoons natural yoghurt  
450 g/1 lb minced turkey,  
preferably a mixture of light  
and dark meat

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt, or to taste

1 tablespoon whole coriander  
seeds and 1 teaspoon whole  
cumin seeds, lightly crushed  
in a mortar, or put between  
sheets of foil and crushed  
with a rolling pin

4 tablespoons finely chopped  
fresh mint

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon crushed red chilli  
flakes

1 teaspoon peeled and finely  
grated fresh ginger

5 tablespoons olive or  
rapeseed oil

Put the yoghurt in a small sieve and set it over a cup as you prepare the rest of your ingredients (10 minutes will do, but longer will not hurt).

Put the strained yoghurt and all the remaining ingredients except the oil in a bowl. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 1 hour, or as long as 24 hours, so that the flavours mingle.

Divide the meat into six pieces and roll into balls. Flatten the balls to make six clean-edged patties 9 cm/ $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

Put the oil in a large frying pan and set over a medium-high heat. When hot, put in as many patties as will fit easily and fry for about 1 minute on each side, or until browned. Turn the heat down to medium-low and continue to cook the patties, turning frequently, until the juices run clear when the patties are pressed. Cook all the patties in this way and serve hot.