

Kitchari Recipe – VARADAAN’s Variation

Kitchari means “mixture”, usually of two grains. Kitchari is one of the healthiest foods you can eat. This Kitchari recipe is based on a recipe given by Dr. Lad for Pancha Karma treatment, and is particularly nourishing and easy to digest. Note there are options for alternatives – there is some flexibility in making kitchari, but please consider staying with the core recipe during the pure fasting phase of a cleanse.

Note that when translating her Indian recipes for westerners, Dr. Lad’s wife Usha, cut the spices to 1/2 quantity. I have restored the original amount for flavor, but consider being light handed when at the core of a fast, and also attend to using doshically appropriate spices, per individual need. This recipe will make approximately 8 servings, or dinner for 4 with enough extra for fried kitchari lunch the next day. Mmmm.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup	Mung Dal (split yellow, not green)
1 cups	Basmati Rice, white
5 cups	Water — note that even more water is fine, while not enough could make a burned pot. . .
1 inch	Ginger root, fresh, chopped or grated — for everyday fare, large chunks are tasty ☺
2 Tsp	Ghee
1/2 tsp	Turmeric — consider 2x or 4x quantity if there is any inflammation, infection, etc.
1/2 tsp	Coriander Powder
1/2 tsp	Cumin Powder
1/2 tsp	Whole Cumin Seeds
1/2 tsp	Mustard Seeds*
1/4 tsp	Mineral Salt — if you are putting into the dal directly.
1 pinch	Asafoetida (Hing)
Handful	Fresh Cilantro Leaves
1 1/2 cups	Assorted Vegetables (optional)

*drop the mustard seeds if pitta imbalance. For Kapha or Vata, add a pinch of ginger powder.

Options:

Use vegetables, especially tridoshic asparagus, and more neutral ones such as zucchini, sweet potato, carrot. It is ok to reverse the proportion of rice to dal, or go somewhere in between.

It is possible to prepare rice and dal separately using proportion of 1 rice:2water, 1dal:3water. . .

But for optimal taste try Varadaan’s 2 pot technique: Start rice, dal and water to simmer in a pressure cooker – for this recipe a 4 qt stainless unit (or larger) will work well. This mixture could be set to boil, and left to steep with no fire for several hours before starting to sautee the ghee, spices and vegetables (except cilantro) in a largish fry/sautee pan. Take care to put slower cooking veggies into the sautee early, and delicate ones last. For instance, asparagus stems go before tips, etc. Keep water in the mixture to protect your food and oil from burning, or overheating (this is a general health tip!). Once the sautee is done and rice/dal has been (re)boiling for a while, put the sautee mixture into the pressure cooker, add the cilantro, stir the mix, close the lid and bring to pressure for a few minutes, remove heat and wait about 45 minutes, or longer.

Notes:

- 1) You don’t need the pressure cooker, but it will save time and energy if you plan accordingly. Important! Before opening pressure cooker, make sure you have brought the pressure down – running cold water over the pot in the sink is one way to do this quickly. With Kitchari, you really cannot overcook the dal/rice part.
- 2) Green Mung Dal is not hulled and therefore is harder to digest – use yellow/hulled for kitchari fast.
- 3) Caution: Kitchari monodiet can lead to constipation if taken exclusively for several days, as it is low in fiber. To ensure proper elimination, the following may prove helpful if taken once a day away from the kitchari meals: psyllium husks (2tsp max) or seeds with abundant water OR oat bran OR prune juice.

More:

- 1) Tridoshic CCF tea recipe: equal parts cumin, coriander and fennel seeds.
- 2) Pancha Karma and/or rigorous fasting should be overseen / monitored by a trained Ayurvedic Practitioner.