

Mulligatawny Soup (Mullagatani)

Inspired by Julie Sahni, Classic Indian Cooking (ISBN 0-688-03721-6)

The exotic name of this soup is derived from two Indian words – *mullaga* which means pepper and *tanni*, which means water or broth. It was created over two centuries ago by local cooks in southern India for their English masters. It is believed that cooks originally served the South Indian soup *rasam*, made with black pepper known as *Mullaga Rasam*, also known as *Mullagatanni*. Over time, however, the ingredients in the soup changed so completely that the present version bears no resemblance whatever to the traditional *rasam*.

Today, the soup consists of a rich broth (vegetables, lamb, chicken or beef) flavored with caramelized onions and spices (turmeric for color, coriander for piquancy, and red pepper for a hot taste) and velvetized with heavy whipping cream, coconut milk, almond milk, or peanut butter.

This soup was prominently featured in the television series Seinfeld.

Serves 6 to 8

1. Prepare ingredients

½ small onion, finely
chopped

knife
cutting board
small bowl

Cut off a small portion from the top end (opposite the root end).

Lay onion flat on the cut side.

Cut in half lengthwise through the root end.

Peel by pulling the skin from the cut end to the root end.

Lay onion flat on cut side. Make 3 to 4 horizontal cuts from the cut end up to a short distance from the root end.

Make narrow vertical cuts lengthwise starting from near the root end. Be careful not to cut the root end to prevent the onion from separating.

Make narrow vertical cuts crosswise starting from the cut end and cutting towards the root end.

Divide onion pieces into two equal parts. One half will be cooked with the other vegetables, the other half will be browned later.

2 medium carrots (about 130
grams), finely diced

Wash.

Peel and discard skin.

Cut in half crosswise.

Quarter each half lengthwise. Then, cut crosswise into cubes.

1 parsnip (about 100 grams),
finely diced

Wash.

Peel and discard skin.

Cut in half crosswise.

Quarter each half lengthwise. Then, cut crosswise into cubes.

1 celery stalk (about 70 grams), finely diced.

Wash.

Cut crosswise into 2- to 3-inch lengths.

Cut each length lengthwise. Then, cut crosswise into cubes.

10 to 15 small mushrooms (about 70 grams)

Wash.

Cut stems.

Cut caps through center into four parts.

1 teaspoon finely chopped garlic

Peel.

Cut lengthwise into narrow strips.

Cut crosswise into cubes.

4 coriander sprigs¹, finely chopped

Bunch sprigs. Cut crosswise into fine pieces.

2. Cook vegetables

6 cups vegetable broth or meat broth or chicken broth
finely chopped garlic
chopped vegetables
1 sprig fresh coriander leaves
¼ teaspoon black pepper

Put the vegetables in a deep heavy-bottomed 3 quart saucepan with the broth, garlic, coriander, and black pepper.

Bring to a boil over medium high heat. Reduce heat and simmer covered, for 45 minutes or until vegetables are soft.

Turn off the heat.

3 quart saucepan with cover

3. Puree vegetables

*electric blender or food processor or food mill
fine sieve (optional)*

When the vegetables in broth are slightly cool, puree the soup (broth and vegetables).

(optional) Then pass the soup through a fine sieve. This is to ensure that it will be smooth and velvety in texture and free of all fibrous particles.

Return the soup to the pan and bring it to a gentle simmer.

¹ Or Italian parsley

4. Cook oil mixture

2 tablespoons ghee or light
vegetable oil

While the soup is simmering, put the oil and onions in a small frying pan over medium high heat.

½ cup chopped onions

Fry onions until they are caramel brown (about 10 minutes), stirring constantly to prevent burning.

4 teaspoons curry powder²
(recipe follows)

Add curry powder and flour, and cook the mixture for 1 minute, stirring rapidly.

3 tablespoons all-purpose
flour

frying pan
wooden spoon

5. Add oil mixture to puree

Turn off heat, and add oil mixture to the gently simmering soup, stirring constantly to prevent lumping.

Simmer until the soup is thickened (about 2 minutes). Turn off heat.

6. Finish

½ cup heavy whipping cream
or coconut milk, or almond
milk, or peanut butter.

Stir in cream, salt to taste, red pepper (optional) and coriander leaves.

kosher salt to taste³

Simmer over low heat until warmed through.

red pepper to taste (optional)⁴

finely minced fresh coriander
leaves⁵

7. Serve

Serve hot in cream soup bowls.

8. Store (optional)

After step 5, the soup may be set aside covered, for several hours, or refrigerated for up to 3 days, or frozen.

Defrost, and heat thoroughly before finishing (step 6) and serving (step 7).

² If you use a commercial blend, make sure it does not have fennel because this spice has a strong aroma which has a tendency to stand out.

³ Because ingredients, particularly curry powder, vary widely in their saltiness, salt is added at the end. If you use the curry powder from the next recipe, start with 1 teaspoon sea salt or 2 teaspoons kosher salt. You may add more to suite your taste.

⁴ Curry powders may already contain red pepper. If it does not, start with ¼ teaspoon and then add more to suite your taste.

⁵ Or finely chopped Italian parsley

Curry Powder Master Recipe

Inspired by Julie Sahni, Classic Indian Cooking (ISBN 0-688-03721-6)

Makes 1 cup

Curry powder, as we know, refers to a yellow powder that is made up of a mix of spices. In India, curry means gravy, which suggests a broader range (in appearance and taste) of spice mixes. For the best results, the spice mixes are prepared with whole spices.

Here is a fragrant curry powder recipe that is used extensively in southern India to flavor vegetable dishes and can be used in any recipe that calls for curry powder.

1. Roast ingredients

½ cup coriander seeds

Heat skillet or wok for two minutes over medium heat.

15 dry red chili pods
(optional)

Dry roast each of the spices separately as follows:

1 ½ teaspoons cumin seeds

1 ½ teaspoons fenugreek
seeds

Place whole spice in skillet or wok.

1 ½ teaspoons black
peppercorns

For the light-colored spices like coriander, cumin, and fenugreek seeds, roast until they turn dark brown.

1 ½ teaspoons black mustard
seeds

For peppercorn, roast until they release fragrance.

For mustard seeds, roast until they begin to pop.

heavy skillet or wok
small bowl

Shake the skillet or wok constantly to prevent burning.

Transfer browned spices to a small bowl to cool completely.

2. Grind

*spice mill or mortar and
pestle*

Grind the spices to a fine powder in several batches, as necessary.

15 to 20 curry leaves (dry or
fresh, optional)

Dry the fresh curry leaves in an ungreased frying pan over low heat for 4 to 5 minutes.

Grind them to a fine powder.

Add to the other ground spices.

3. Mix

3 tablespoons turmeric
powder

Combine all ground spices.

Stir in turmeric.

mixing bowl
spoon

Mix all ingredients well.

4. Store

airtight jar

Transfer the curry powder to an airtight jar, cover tightly, and store in a cool place for up to three months.