

# Dal (Indian Lentil Curry)

**Recipe video below.** There are countless variations of Dal all across India. This is a northern Indian version called "dal tadka" that's akin to what is served in Indian restaurants. "Tadka" refers to spices sizzling in hot oil that's poured over the dal. It's dramatic and gives it a flavour bump - but is optional. I include it for company, and leave it out for midweek or if being served alongside other punchy flavoured curries. Heat level in this recipe is mild - just a tickle. If you like it fiery, try leaving in the seeds in the chillies and/or adding some chilli powder. This is a dal that's flavourful to have as a main!



4.95 from 39 votes

Prep Time	Cook Time	Soaking	Total Time
15 mins	1 hr 30 mins	1 hr	1 hr 45 mins

Cuisine: Indian    Keyword: Dal, Lentil Curry    Servings: 3 - 4 people    Calories: 310cal

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## Ingredients

### Dal

- 2 tbsp / 30 g ghee , or 1 tbsp oil + 1 tbsp/15g butter (Note 1)
- 2 green cayenne chillies , deseeded and cut into chunks (optional) (Note 2)
- 1 medium onion , finely chopped (brown or yellow)
- 6 garlic cloves , finely chopped
- 1 tbsp ginger , finely chopped (1.5cm / 3/5")
- 8 fresh curry leaves , or 6 dried (Note 3)
- 1 tomato , chopped
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 cup dried chana dal , yellow split peas or other yellow lentils (Note 4 for other lentils)
- 4 cups / 1 litre water
- 1/2 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/8 tsp garam marsala
- 3/4 tsp salt

### Tadka (optional):

- 1 1/2 tbsp / 20g ghee , or half each butter + oil (Note 1)
- 1 eschalot or 1/4 small onion , halved lengthways and sliced (Note 5)
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1/2 tsp black mustard seeds (optional)
- 3 dried chillies , broken in half, seeds removed (optional)

### To serve

- Fresh coriander/cilantro sprigs (optional)
- Steamed basmati rice

## Instructions

1. Soak Lentils: Rinse lentils and leave to soak in plenty of water for 1 hour. Drain in colander.
2. Heat ghee/oil in a heavy based saucepan over high heat. Add green chillies and fry for a minute until starting to blister.

3. Add onions and fry until softened.
4. Lower heat to medium, add garlic, ginger and curry leaves. Cook for 1 minute until garlic starts to turn golden and smells amazing.
5. Add tomatoes and cumin, cook until tomatoes start to break down and thicken to a paste - about 2 minutes.
6. Add lentils, water, tumeric and salt. Stir, bring to simmer, cover and simmer gently for 1 hour. Stir two or three times during the hour.
7. Remove lid and simmer gently for 30 minutes to thicken, stirring every now and then. The dal is ready when it has a consistency like porridge - some lentils should be intact but some have broken down to thicken the sauce.
8. Stir through garam masala at the end. Adjust salt if desired.
9. Pour over Tadka, if using, and stir through.
10. Serve Dal over rice, garnished with a sprig of coriander if desired.

### **Tadka - Sizzling Spices (optional)**

1. Heat ghee in a small pan over medium heat until hot but not smoking.
2. Add cumin and mustard seeds, stir until cumin is slightly golden.
3. Then add chillies and cook for 20 seconds, then add eschallots and cook until tinged with gold. Don't let the spices burn!
4. Immediately pour into Dahl.

### **Notes**

1. Ghee is clarified butter and it's the main fat used in Indian cooking. Sold in the international section of Coles and other major Australian supermarkets. Otherwise, use equal parts butter + vegetable oil.
2. The green chillies sold at supermarkets in Australia are cayenne green chillies.
3. Curry leaves really add an extra something-something to curries. Find them in the fresh herb section of Australian supermarkets or find dried in the dried herbs and spice section.
4. LENTILS: I use chana dal here for its shape and texture - sold in the international section of some Coles supermarkets. Any yellow dal such as channa dal, toor dal or moong dal can be used in this recipe.

If you cannot get hold of chana dal, **yellow split peas are a terrific substitution** but only use 3 cups of water and cook for 40 minutes covered and 30 minutes uncovered.

**For toor dal**, only use 3 cups of water and cook per recipe times.

**All other lentils** - follow the Yellow Split Pea directions above, then at the end of the cook time, you might need to add more water and/or cook for longer.

This recipe is **not suited to puyé lentils**, or other teeny tiny lentils. Anything shaped like yellow split peas should be fine.

5. Eschallots are the small onions that are finer than normal onions. The white part of green onions/scallions/shallots will be fine, or even 1/4 of a normal onion.

6. GENERAL NOTES: \* Fat levels - You'll miss some of the luxurious richness if you cut down on fat but you can reduce slightly if desired. \* Dal will thicken after cooking. Stop the cooking just before what you think is the ideal consistency, and it will be just right by the time you serve. If

reheating the next day, add some water to loosen the dal. \* Dal is FILLING!!! This recipe feeds 3 very generously, or 4 normal servings.\* Be really careful making the tadka, as it's easy to burn the spices. It is better to have oil that's not hot enough and then turn up the heat, than oil that is too hot to start with.

7. Recipe Source: This recipe is another RecipeTin Family effort. We referenced a number of authentic sources, distilling the best bits into our recipe to achieve the closest possible replica of the Dahl we love from Indian restaurants. Indian celebrity chef Sanjeev Kapoor's dal tadka was one source, as was a recipe we found from Rick Stein and his travels across India. A few Youtube videos from home cooks in India also helped us get the tadka technique down (after burning the spices and smoking ourselves out of the kitchen a couple of times - read the notes and learn from us!) We hope you enjoy this dal as much as we do.

8. Nutrition per serving, dal only, assuming 4 servings.

## **Nutrition**

Calories: 310cal

Another great recipe by [recipetineats.com](https://www.recipetineats.com)