

## Kitchari

There are many variations of kitchari, but the basic ingredients are mung beans, rice and spices. Kitchari is considered a very healing food in Ayurvedic medicine and is often used for cleanses. Spices are varied somewhat for individuals, but, this general recipe will suit virtually everyone. Vegetables vary depending on what is in season and what you have available. The consistency of kitchari should be that of a porridge – either thick or thin, but still very soft and well cooked. (It is not at all like a Mexican rice and beans dish). It freezes very well. I usually freeze it just at the point where the rice and beans are cooked, but, before I add veggies and spices.

½ cup mung beans

½ cup brown basmati rice

About 4 cups of water

(this is easily doubled if you want to put some into the freezer)

Put all ingredients into a large pot and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer slowly for at least 1 hour, or bring to a boil, turn off heat and let stand overnight. The rice and beans should be very soft and broken down, and all or most of the water absorbed.

Add a little more water, if needed, and about 2 cups of finely chopped vegetables. Onions, carrots and a variety of greens are a good start, but whatever you have on hand will work just fine. Increase heat to cook vegetables.

While the veggies are cooking, measure out the spices into a small bowl. Vary quantities according to your tastes and what you have on hand. You can increase or decrease as you like, but this is a basic combination. These are level tablespoons, not heaping tablespoons.

1 tbsp ground turmeric

1 tbsp freshly ground cumin (freshly ground tastes remarkably better than powder)

1 tbsp finely chopped ginger

1 tbsp freshly ground coriander

1 tsp freshly ground fennel

Other spices you may wish to add:

Freshly chopped garlic

½ tsp cinnamon

Pinch of cayenne or some black pepper

1 tsp ground mustard seeds

Put 1 tbsp coconut fat or ghee in a small fry pan. When hot, put all the spices, at once, into the hot pan, and cook for 1 minute or less, stirring continuously. You are heating the oil and spices just enough so that the spices release their flavours into the oil. Pour all the spices and oil into the kitchari while the veggies are cooking. Continue to cook until the veggies are soft. When done, add about ½ cup finely chopped cilantro (or parsley, but cilantro is traditional).

Pour into a bowl. Traditionally, 1-2 tbsp ghee would be poured on top. I sometimes use 1 tbsp olive oil on top for serving, but extra oil is not needed. Sprinkle on sea salt to taste. You may also add a little squirt of fresh lime juice on top.