

Vambotu Pahi Recipe (Aubergine Pickle Sri Lankan Recipe)

Ingredients:

2 large aubergines (eggplants)
2 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons ground turmeric
oil for frying
1 tablespoon black mustard seeds
½ cup vinegar
1 medium onion, peeled and finely chopped
4 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh ginger
1 tablespoon ground coriander (cilantro)\
2 tablespoons ground cumin
1 teaspoon ground fennel
½ cup tamarind pulp
¾ cup hot water
3 fresh green chilies, seeded and sliced
8 cm (3-inch) cinnamon stick
1 teaspoon chili powder, optional
2 teaspoons sugar
extra salt to taste

Method:

Slice aubergines thinly, rub with salt and turmeric, put in a bowl and leave at least an hour. Drain off liquid and dry aubergines on paper towels. Heat about 2.5 cm (1 inch) oil in a frying pan and fry aubergine slices quite slowly until brown on both sides. Lift out with slotted spoon and put in a dry bowl. Reserve oil. Put mustard seed and vinegar in blender container, cover and blend on high speed until mustard is ground. Add onion, garlic, and ginger, cover and blend again until a smooth paste. Set aside. Put coriander, cumin and fennel in small dry pan and heat gently, shaking pan or stirring, until medium brown in color. If preferred, substitute 1½ tablespoons Ceylon curry powder for these ingredients. Squeeze tamarind pulp in hot water, strain and discard seeds, reserve liquid. Heat half cup reserved oil and fry blended mixture for 5 minutes. Add coriander mixture or curry powder, chilies, cinnamon, chili powder if used and tamarind liquid. Add fried aubergines and any oil that has collected in the bowl, stir well, cover and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat, stir in sugar. Add extra salt if necessary. Cool thoroughly and store in clean dry jars. Keeps for weeks in the refrigerator.