

Stuffed Karela (Bitter Melon)

Recipe #1

Ingredients

- 4 Karela (Bitter melon), size about 3 inch long. If long one, cut into 3 inch pieces (available in Indian stores, it looks like a small cucumber with dragon spikes)
- 1 Green chili, finely chopped
- ½ inch Ginger, finely chopped
- 2 cloves Garlic, finely chopped
- 1 Tbsp Coriander, fresh, chopped
- 3 tsp ghee (clarified butter)
- 2 tsp Besan (Indian chickpea flour)

Spices

- ½ tsp Red chili powder,
- 4 tsp Mineral Salt, or to taste
- 1 tsp Coriander powder
- ¼ tsp Turmeric powder
- ½ tsp Amchur (Mango seed powder), or 1 tsp lime/lemon juice (avail. in Indian stores)
- 1/8 tsp Cumin seeds
- Hing/Asafoetida (available in Indian stores)

Directions

1. Wash karala thoroughly with water. If karala are of longer variety, cut them into pieces of 3 inch size. Remove skin of all the pieces by scraping with a sharp knife.
2. Keep the skin aside. Slit the karelas length wise. Remove the seeds. Discard the seeds if very hard, otherwise mix them with the skin scrape.
3. Take 1 tsp salt and apply it thoroughly to all the pieces of karelas. Keep aside for about 1 hour.
4. Mix 1 tsp salt to karela skin and keep aside for 1 hour.
5. Heat a non sticking frying pan and add 2 tsp oil. When the oil becomes hot, add cumin seeds and hing. When the seeds become dark, add green chili, ginger and garlic. Cook for 2-3 minutes and add all the spices and besan. Stir well and cook until the mixture turns light brown, about 5-7 minutes. Mix half the coriander leaves.
6. Take the karela skin in a sieve and wash thoroughly with water. Add it to the washed skin scrape above mixture and stir.
7. Wash the karelas with water. Fill the above mixture in each karela.
8. Heat a non sticking frying pan and spray oil. Place all the karelas in the pan, cover with a lid and reduce the stove to low. Let them cook for 5-7 minutes. Change the side of karelas and again cover with the lid. Cook for 5-7 minutes. Sprinkle coriander leaves.

Recipe #2

Take a few small, thick karelas. Slit down longitudinally without separating the two halves. Boil (or steam) these for a little while in water to which a little salt has been added. Boiling should be done till the karelas are semi-cooked. Throw away the water and keep the karelas aside.

Masala preparation:

Make a paste of garlic, ginger, some chili powder as per taste with a little bit of water. Take some garam masala (this is a ready made mix of some spices) powder and sprinkle this on the above paste and mix together.

Boil some potatoes and mash.

- Heat a little oil in a pot.
- Add mustard seeds, hing, red chili pieces, turmeric powder and salt to taste.
- Add the masala paste prepared earlier and very little tomato puree.
- When you get the masala flavor add mashed potatoes to this.
- Stir and mix the mixture to a lump.
- Stuff the split karelas with portions of the above lump.
- Heat some oil in a pot and fry the stuffed karelas.