

Yellow Split Pea Dal

From Still Life with Menu cookbook, by Mollie Katzen (a good cookbook!)

'Dal' in Indian cooking refers to porridge-like dishes made from dried legumes – usually split peas or lentils. Dal is often served in a thinned state as a soup, but equally often it will be a thick, hearty side dish. This is a thick dal, comprehensive and highly spiced enough to be the focus of a meal. Leftovers can be thinned with a little water and served as a soup. I serve this as an entrée, over brown rice.

1 cup dried yellow split peas
5 cups water (plus ½ cup more later)
2 TBSP butter (*I use olive oil*)
3 large cloves garlic
¾ tsp cumin seeds
¾ tsp mustard seeds
½ tsp turmeric
½ tsp cinnamon
¾ tsp salt (I skip or use less)
Black pepper
Crushed red pepper

Place split peas in a saucepan with 5 cups of water. Cover and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer very slowly, partially covered, until soft (2 – 2 ½ hours).

Melt butter/heat oil in a large skillet. Use a garlic press to crush the garlic. Add cumin and mustard seeds, turmeric and cinnamon. Cook, stirring, over medium heat 3-5 minutes.

Add cooked split peas, and stir until everything is well mixed. Keep stirring and cooking as you gradually add an additional ½ cup or so of water. You want to get a creamy consistency but not soup. Add salt, black pepper and red peppers. Cook and stir another 5 minutes over low heat.