

RAW BANANA OR PLANTAIN KOFTA RECIPE

There are 3 steps to this recipe –:

I - Raw Banana / Plantain balls (*koftas*) OR raw banana patties/*tikkis* - The choice is YOURS!

II - Preparing the Curry

III - Serving this dish

Serves: 4 (Makes about 10-12 *koftas/tikkis/patties*)

Step I - Raw Banana / Plantain Koftas / Patties:

Ingredients:

Raw banana or Plantain - 2 pcs

Potato - 1 small-medium sized

Onion: 3/4 cup, finely chopped

Ginger: Grated 1 tbsp

Green chillies: 2 - chopped fine (adjust to your own spice tolerance level)

Chilli powder: 1/4 tsp

Turmeric powder : 1/2 tsp

Aamchoor powder: 1 tsp (available in Indian stores)

Coriander powder: ½ tsp

Cumin powder: ½ tsp

Salt: to taste

Regular cooking oil: for deep frying *koftas* (a lot!) OR pan-frying patties/*tikkis* (2-3 tbslp in a non-stick pan)

How I did it:

- Cut each raw banana or plantain into 3 pcs - roughly 1.5" - 2" per pc, with the skin intact. Throw away the edges.
- Boil the raw bananas in a pot of water, almost covered with water. Add 1/4 tsp turmeric while boiling. Cover and let it boil on low-medium heat until done. Boil for approximately 25 mins and check. Pierce with a fork to check if it has softened. When it's done, the fork should go through easily.

Plantain usually takes about 35-40 mins to boil as they are tougher whereas medium sized raw bananas should be done in 30 mins. They should be cooked soft but not mushy / overcooked.

- When done, run it through tap water so that it cools down. Remove skin. It should come off very easily.
- Meanwhile, boil 1 potato. Peel and keep it aside.
- In a deep bowl, mash the raw bananas using your fingers or a spoon. Add the boiled potato and mash it too. Ensure it is mashed well.
- Add all the remaining ingredients and combine together.

For Koftas:

- To make the *koftas*, take tennis ball sized portions of the above mixture in your palm. Give it an even round shape. Depending on the size of the bananas / plantains used, you can easily come up with 10-12 pcs.
- Next, heat sufficient oil in a deep dish or *kadhai* to deep-fry the *koftas*.

Make sure the oil is hot before you start frying. You may need to heat the oil on medium heat for up to 2 mins. Put only 1 pc at first to make sure the koftas don't break while frying. If you feel that the banana mixture is too mushy, you can add 1-2 tbsp of besan (chickpea flour) in the mixture to bind it. To avoid the koftas from sticking to one another, space out putting the koftas by 30 seconds so that they are a little fried before the next one comes in. Do not overcrowd the kadhai / frying pan.

For Patties (Tikkis):

- To make raw banana patties, take the same portion of the banana mixture as for the kofta (a tennis ball size). Make a nice round at first and flatten it. Use your palm and fingers to give it an even patty-like shape.
- In a non-stick pan, heat 2-3 tbsp of oil. Add the patties and let it cook on low heat until cooked. Turn over to make sure it is cooked / browned on both sides

This can also be served as an appetizer along with some coriander & mint chutney. I'll leave the chutney recipe for another day.

Step II - Preparing the Curry:

Ingredients:

Cinnamon : 1 thin stick
Bay leaves: 2 small
Cardamom: 2-3 (pods only)
Whole black pepper: 6
Any cooking oil: 2 tbsp
Almonds: 7-8 pcs soaked for at least 10 mins in hot water. Remove skin. Add a little bit of water to grind to a thick but smooth paste.
Onion: 1 cup - Finely chopped (1 medium sized)
Ginger paste: 1 tbsp
Garlic paste: 1 tbsp
Tomatoes: 1 medium sized – Ground to a paste.
Green chillies – 2 whole (optional)
Salt: to taste

In a bowl, make a thick paste of the following dry spices by adding very little water:

Coriander powder: ½ tsp
Cumin powder: 1/2 tsp
Turmeric powder: 1/4 tsp
Chilli powder (optional): 1/4 tsp

How I did it :

- Heat oil in a heavy bottomed pan/*kadhai*. Add cinnamon sticks, bay leaves, cardamom pods and whole black pepper. Fry for about 30-40 secs on low heat, stirring occasionally.
- Add chopped onions. Fry on low-medium heat until brownish.

- Add ginger and garlic paste. Fry for another 1-2 mins, until combined well. If it starts to stick on the bottom, sprinkle a little bit of water and scrape it off, blending it into the *masala*.
- Add the thick spice paste prepared with coriander powder, cumin powder, turmeric & chilli. Continue frying for another 2 mins.
- Add the tomato paste and salt. Fry until the tomatoes are fully cooked and the *masala* becomes a lumpy mass, darker in color than how it started. It should also look glossy as the oil starts to surface on the *masala*. (approx 12 mins on low heat).
- Add the almond paste and continue for another 5 mins. The almond paste should have combined well with the rest of the *masalas* and the favors integrated well to make our curry.
- Once you have achieved that, add about 400 ml of water (preferably, boiling water as it speeds up the cooking process). Once the curry starts boiling, cover and let it boil on low-medium heat for another 10 mins, stirring occasionally. Check for salt and spices. At this point, you can add the whole green chillies, if you wish. The curry should be thicker in consistency at the end of this process. Turn off the heat.

Step III: Serving this dish:

Ingredients for Garnishing:

Red chillies: 1. Remove seeds and cut in thin strips
Fresh cream: 2-3 tsp
OR
Coriander leaves chopped: a handful

How I did it:

- Start preparing to serve this dish about 10-15 mins prior to actual serving. Use a serving dish that is flat so that the koftas can be placed without overcrowding.
- In the serving dish, place the *koftas/tikkis/patties*.
- Heat the curry prepared above to make sure it is piping hot! Turn off the heat.
- Pour the hot curry over the kofta. Be careful not to spill over as the curry should be very hot at this point. Make sure that the *koftas* are almost submerged in the curry. Let the koftas soak for at least 10-15 mins, covered.
- If you find the dish is not warm enough when you are ready to eat, microwave it for 1-2 mins immediately after soaking.
- Once the soaking is complete, garnish with fresh cream and thin strips of de-seeded red chillies. Alternatively, you could garnish with chopped coriander leaves.
- Enjoy the *koftas* with steamed rice.

Too little soaking and the curry doesn't go inside the koftas. Too much soaking and you'll have very crumbly koftas. Therefore, the process of serving this dish is very important to make sure you serve the the koftas that you've worked so hard to make!

If the bananas were boiled nice and soft, soak them for 10 mins before serving. If bananas feel hard after you've mashed and made your koftas, soak for up to 20 mins before serving.