



Tomato Curry with Paneer

lightly adapted from Mangoes and Curry Leaves
serves 6 (recipe can easily be halved or doubled)

- 3 1/2 cups crushed canned tomatoes
- 1 pound paneer (fresh or store-bought)
- 2/3 cup ghee, peanut or safflower oil, or raw sesame oil for frying
- 1/2 cup minced garlic, or mashed to a paste
- 3 tablespoons minced ginger
- 3 cups diced onion
- 3-4 cups water
- 2 tablespoons minced, seeded green cayenne chiles
- 3 brown cardamom pods, or 5 green cardamom pods, smashed
- 2 whole cloves (optional)
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon pimentón, or 1/2 teaspoon cayenne
- sea salt, to taste

Slice the paneer into small rectangles (slightly larger than bite size) and set aside. Fill a wide, heavy skillet with a little more than 1/4" of ghee or oil. Heat over medium-high, then add paneer slices in a single layer. Don't crowd, and brown in batches if necessary. Cook, turning once, until golden on both sides, 4-5 minutes per batch. Lift out, letting the oil drain off, and place on a plate.

Measure out 1/3 cup ghee or oil from the pan and pour into a large, heavy-bottomed nonreactive saucepan (your Le Creuset is good here), reserving the remaining ghee or oil for another use. Heat over medium-high, then add garlic and ginger, lower the heat to medium and stir-fry for a minute or so. Add the onions and cook, stirring frequently, until very soft and pale gold but not browned, about 10-12 minutes.

Add the tomatoes and stir them in, then add 3 cups of water. The mixture should be quite liquid. Bring to a boil over high heat. Add the green chile, cardamom, cloves, if using, turmeric, pimentón and cayenne. Lower the heat to maintain a steady simmer, and cook for about an hour, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. You may need to lower the heat a little more partway through the cooking as the mixture thickens and/or add a bit more water, as needed.

Add the paneer to the sauce and simmer for another 45 minutes. Taste and add salt.

Serve as a main dish with plenty of rice (I like brown basmati), and a stir-fry of greens in coconut oil.