

'Bharta' is a comfort food in households across India, made with roasted and mashed aubergine and flavoured with simple spices.

Ingredients:

2 medium onions, finely chopped, 1 tin of chopped tomatoes, 2 aubergines, 2-3 courgettes, 1 tbsp ginger paste, 1 tsp cumin seeds, 3 tsp red chilli powder, 1 tsp coriander powder, ½ inch piece of root ginger julienned, salt to taste, 8-10 potato wedges (optional)

Method:

Place the aubergines and courgettes on a baking tray and place under a pre-heated grill. Turn occasionally to make sure the skin is evenly charred. When the skin appears to be getting crispy, turn off the grill. Remove the aubergines and courgettes and place them in a plastic bag. Tie a knot and leave the vegetables to sweat.

In a pan, heat 2-3 tbsp of oil. Add the cumin, onions and ginger paste. Fry till onions are softened and translucent. Add the tomatoes and stir well. Cover the pan and allow the masala to cook.

Meanwhile, carefully open the knot on the plastic bag and lift out veggies. The skin should come away fairly easily. Use a spoon, if necessary. Flake all the skin away from the veg and discard. Use a potato masher to mash the aubergine and courgettes to a pulp.

In the pan, stir the onion and tomato masala so that it cooks evenly. Add the red chilli powder and cook for a further 5-7 minutes. Once the oil starts to separate from the masala paste, add the potato wedges, aubergine and courgette pulp and mix well. Add coriander powder and cover to cook till potatoes are cooked through. Add salt to taste and stir well. Turn off the heat and sprinkle over with ginger juliennes.

Serve with light chapatis or parathas.