

THERE'S A REASON CHICKEN TIKKA MASALA is so popular at Indian restaurants: The creamy tomato sauce, with its heady spices, is deeply comforting. There's also a reason most of us don't attempt it at home: It seems like you couldn't possibly outshine the pros. But armed with the right spices, it's easy to make it in your own kitchen. Pair it with homemade naan, the wonderfully chewy bread, to really impress your guests—and to scoop up every last drop of that wildly delicious sauce.

Chicken Tikka Masala

ACTIVE 1 HOUR TOTAL 5½ HOURS

6 SERVINGS *The yogurt helps tenderize the chicken; the garlic, ginger, and spices in the marinade infuse it with lots of flavor.*

- 6 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 4 tsp. finely grated peeled ginger
- 4 tsp. ground turmeric
- 2 tsp. garam masala
- 2 tsp. ground coriander
- 2 tsp. ground cumin
- 1½ cups whole-milk yogurt (not Greek)
- 1 Tbsp. kosher salt
- 2 lb. skinless, boneless chicken breasts, halved lengthwise
- 3 Tbsp. ghee (clarified butter) or vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup tomato paste
- 6 cardamom pods, crushed
- 2 dried chiles de árbol or ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 28-oz. can whole peeled tomatoes
- 2 cups heavy cream
- ¾ cup chopped fresh cilantro plus sprigs for garnish
- Steamed basmati rice (for serving)

Combine garlic, ginger, turmeric, garam masala, coriander, and cumin in a small bowl. Whisk yogurt, salt, and half of spice mixture in a medium bowl; add chicken and turn to coat. Cover and chill 4–6 hours. Cover and chill remaining spice mixture.

Heat ghee in a large heavy pot over medium heat. Add onion, tomato paste, cardamom, and chiles and cook, stirring often, until tomato paste has darkened and onion is soft, about 5 minutes. Add remaining half of spice mixture and cook, stirring often, until bottom of pot begins to brown, about 4 minutes.

Add tomatoes with juices, crushing them with your hands as you add them. Bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer, stirring often and scraping up browned bits from bottom of pot, until sauce thickens, 8–10 minutes.

Add cream and chopped cilantro. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until sauce thickens, 30–40 minutes.

Meanwhile, preheat broiler. Line a rimmed baking sheet with foil and set a wire rack inside sheet. Arrange chicken on rack in a single layer. Broil until chicken starts to blacken in spots (it will not be cooked through), about 10 minutes. »

