



Chana Curry

Whether you are a meat-eater, vegetarian, or vegan - a common topic that has crossed most people's minds is: protein.

As the world of veganism and plant-based diets expands in population, preconceived myths that exist amongst non-vegetarians about their vegetarian counterparts are slowly but consistently debunked.

One such popular, yet incorrect, myth is that an individual cannot attain all of the nutrients, proteins, and minerals needed when on a vegetarian diet. Since many Indian religions and cultures value vegetarianism, countless Indian meals serve as great evidence to demonstrate that a delicious, vegan, meal can also be incredibly fulfilling both in terms of quantity and in protein. One perfect Indian dish to showcase all that veganism has to offer is Chana Masala, also known as Chana Curry, which is a dish from the Indian state of Punjab and most popular in North Indian cuisine.

People all across the world, and not just India, absolutely love Chana Masala. Even Taiwan's president, Tsai Ing-wen, recently tweeted out her love for the popular Indian dish!

<https://twitter.com/iingwen/status/1316608930651402240>

So what is Chana Curry?

"Chana" is the Hindi word for chickpeas, which are a type of legume. Different types of chickpeas include the Bengal gram and the garbanzo bean. Chickpeas are an extremely healthy and strong source of not just protein but vitamins, minerals, and fibers as well; this makes chickpeas a superb replacement for meat in vegan or vegetarian diets.

Chana curry is spiced chickpeas coated in a thick tomato-based gravy that is doused in onion, garlic, ginger, coriander, cayenne pepper, turmeric, cardamom, and even more spices and herbs. Needless to say, every bite overflows with all of the most perfect, fresh flavors. A classic chana masala is also sprinkled with amchoor powder, which is a dried green mango powder, and kasoori methi, which are fenugreek leaves. The amchoor in particular provides a slightly sour and citrus taste in pleasant contrast to the predominant dry and spicy flavor of the chickpeas.

Why is Chana Curry (Chana Masala) Healthy?

There are endless reasons why chana curry is beneficial for your health, and the primary causes lie in its main ingredient: chickpeas. In a 28-gram serving, chickpeas contain around 46 calories of which only around 70% are from carbs, and the remaining calories are from protein (3 grams) and fat. In fact, several studies demonstrate that the quality of protein in chickpeas is higher than other legumes because it has every amino acid apart from one, which can easily be made up for by adding whole grains to the meal. Since chickpeas are high in protein in fiber, it is a filling food that prevents overeating whilst also consuming less calories.

Not only that but chickpeas have a low glycemic index (GI), which is a measure of how fast blood sugar increases after consuming a particular food; low-GI foods tend to aid blood sugar management. Plus, since it has high fiber and protein content, this only exacerbates the positive role that chickpeas play in blood sugar regulation.

Finally, several sources also indicate that chickpeas help lessen risk for several chronic diseases. For example, chickpeas can prevent high blood pressure which can often lead to heart disease.

Does Chana Masala have dairy? Is Chana Masala Usually Vegan?

No, chana masala does not contain dairy, and yes it is naturally vegan-friendly, as you can tell by all of the ingredients discussed earlier. That being said, there are several non-vegetarian options of chana masala such as lamb chana masala as well.

What do you eat chana with?

Chana, and chana masala, can be eaten with anything including your favorite type of rice, quinoa, or bread. President Ing-wen enjoys chana masala with naan, a soft Indian bread. That being said, chana curry is also a great meal to eat on its own.

