



BANGLADESHI (CHITTAGONG)

Kala Bhuna

COMPLEXITY	SERVES	PREP	COOK	TECHNIQUE	CUT
Involved	6	20 min + 1 hr marinating	2 hr 30 min	Braise	Chuck roast & stew beef

Ingredients

- 1.2 kg (2½ lb) chuck roast, cut into 4 cm (1½ in) cubes
- 120 ml (½ cup) mustard oil (or vegetable oil)
- 3 onions, finely sliced
- 1 tbsp ginger paste
- 1 tbsp garlic paste
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 to 2 tsp chilli powder
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 bay leaves
- 4 cardamom pods
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 4 cloves
- 4 green chillies, slit
- 1 tsp roasted cumin powder (see step 7)
- 125 ml (½ cup) water

Steps

1. Mix the beef with the ginger and garlic pastes, turmeric, chilli powder and salt. Leave to marinate for 1 hour, or overnight in the fridge.
2. If using mustard oil, heat it in a heavy pot over medium heat until it smokes lightly and loses its sharp smell, about 2 minutes, then cool for 1 minute.
3. Add the whole spices and bay leaves and let them sizzle for 30 seconds. Add the onions and cook for 15 to 20 minutes, stirring, until deep golden brown.
4. Add the beef, ground cumin and coriander. Raise the heat to medium-high and cook, stirring often, for 15 minutes until the meat turns brown and the oil begins to separate. This slow frying is called bhuna.
5. Add the water and sugar, cover, and braise over low heat for 1½ hours, stirring every 20 minutes and adding a splash of water if it catches.
6. Uncover and cook for 20 to 30 minutes more, stirring, until the sauce is almost dry, very dark brown and glossy. This is the signature "kala" (black) look.
7. Stir in the pepper, green chillies and roasted cumin (dry-roast whole cumin in a pan for 2 minutes, then grind). Taste for salt and serve.

Notes

- **Serving:** with plain rice, paratha or khichuri.
- **Heat:** Chittagong versions are fiery; use one chilli and 1 tsp chilli powder for milder.
- **Make ahead:** keeps 3 to 4 days in the fridge or 3 months frozen; reheat with a spoonful of water until steaming hot.

- **Slow cooker:** do steps 1 to 4 in the pot, then cook on low for 7 to 8 hours (high 4). Finish by simmering uncovered in the pot until almost dry, as in step 6.