

Recipes excerpted from **5 Spices, 50 Dishes, Simple Indian Recipes Using Five Common Spices** by Ruta Kahate. Photography by Susie Cushner. Copyright 2007. Published by Chronicle Books, San Francisco, CA. Reprinted with permission of the publisher. All rights reserved.

Everyday Yellow Dal

This simple dal goes with practically any Indian menu. It can be part of an elaborate meal, or simply ladled over freshly steamed rice with a little store-bought Indian pickle or chutney on the side. If you'd like to dress it up a bit, sprinkle a handful of Burnt Onions on top just before serving.

1 cup yellow split peas, soaked in cold water for 1 hour
3 cups water
1 large tomato (about 8 ounces), cut into 8 wedges
1/4 cup canola oil
1/2 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 medium red onion, finely chopped (about 1-1/2 cups)
5 large cloves garlic, thinly sliced
1 teaspoon coriander seeds, finely ground
3/4 teaspoon ground turmeric
1/2 teaspoon cayenne
1/4 cup minced cilantro leaves
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 teaspoon salt

Drain the dal (split peas) and place in a large saucepan. Add the fresh water and tomato and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a simmer, cover and cook until the peas are tender, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Pick out any tomato skins and whisk the dal to emulsify it. Keep warm over low heat.

Make the *tadka*: Heat the oil in a medium skillet over high heat. When the oil begins to smoke, add the cumin seeds, covering the pan with a lid or spatter screen. After the seeds have stopped sputtering, add the onion and garlic and sauté over medium heat until most of the onion has turned dark brown, about 5 minutes. Add the coriander, turmeric, and cayenne, stir, and pour the onion mixture over the dal. Add the cilantro, butter, and salt to the dal and simmer for another 5 minutes. Serve hot.

Serves 4.