

Classic Butter Chicken with Rice: Ultimate Cozy Indian Comfort Food

Butter Chicken with Rice: The Ultimate Cozy and Flavorful Indian Comfort Dish!



TIME
30 min

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INGREDIENTS

1 lb boneless, skinless chicken breast or thighs, cut into bite-sized pieces
¾ cup plain yogurt (full-fat recommended)
1 tablespoon lemon juice
1 tablespoon ginger-garlic paste
1 teaspoon garam masala
¼ teaspoon turmeric
¼ teaspoon chili powder (adjust to your spice preference)
Salt, to taste
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 tablespoon oil (vegetable or olive oil)
1 small onion, finely chopped
2 teaspoons ginger-garlic paste
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1 teaspoon paprika (sweet or Kashmiri)
... teaspoon chili powder (optional, for extra heat)
1 cup tomato purée or crushed tomatoes
1 cup heavy cream
Salt and black pepper, to taste
Fresh cilantro, chopped (for garnish)
1 cup basmati rice
2 cups water
1 tablespoon unsalted butter or ghee
Pinch of salt
1-2 cloves or a small piece of cinnamon stick

(optional, for aroma)

DIRECTIONS

1. Marinate the Chicken: In a medium bowl, combine the 1 lb chicken pieces with $\frac{1}{2}$ cup plain yogurt, 1 tablespoon lemon juice, 1 tablespoon ginger-garlic paste, 1 teaspoon garam masala, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon turmeric, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon chili powder, and salt to taste. Toss well to coat all the chicken. Cover and refrigerate for at least 30 minutes, or for best results, 2-4 hours or even overnight.
2. Cook the Basmati Rice: Rinse the 1 cup basmati rice under cold running water until the water runs clear. This helps remove excess starch, resulting in fluffier rice. In a medium saucepan, combine the rinsed rice with 2 cups water, 1 tablespoon unsalted butter or ghee, and a pinch of salt. If using, add the 1-2 cloves or a small piece of cinnamon stick. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Once boiling, reduce the heat to low, cover the pot tightly with a lid, and simmer for 15-20 minutes, or until all the water is absorbed and the rice is tender and fragrant. Remove from heat and let sit, covered, for 5 minutes before fluffing with a fork.
3. Prepare the Sauce Base: While the rice cooks and chicken marinates, begin the sauce. In a large skillet or Dutch oven, melt 2 tablespoons unsalted butter with 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat. Add the finely chopped small onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and translucent, about 5-7 minutes. Add the 2 teaspoons ginger-garlic paste and cook for another minute until fragrant. Stir in the ground spices: 1 teaspoon ground cumin, 1 teaspoon paprika, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon turmeric, 1 teaspoon garam masala, and ... teaspoon chili powder (if using). Cook for 1 minute,

stirring constantly, to toast the spices and enhance their aroma.

4. **4. Add Tomato and Simmer:** Pour in the 1 cup tomato purØe or crushed tomatoes. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer. Add the marinated chicken (no need to wipe off marinade) to the sauce. Stir to combine. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 15-20 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through.
5. **5. Finish with Cream & Serve:** Stir in the 1 cup heavy cream. Let the sauce heat through for another 2-3 minutes, ensuring it doesn't boil vigorously. Taste the sauce and adjust seasoning with additional salt and black pepper as needed. Remove the optional cloves or cinnamon stick from the rice. Serve the warm, rich Butter Chicken generously over the fluffy basmati rice. Garnish with fresh chopped cilantro for a burst of color and freshness. Enjoy this ultimate cozy and flavorful Indian dish!

SWAPS & NOTES

Chicken: Boneless, skinless chicken thighs are often preferred for Butter Chicken as they stay juicier during cooking, but chicken breast works too.

Ensure chicken is cut into uniform bite-sized pieces for even cooking.

Plain Yogurt: Use plain, full-fat yogurt for the marinade. It helps tenderize the chicken and adds a tangy depth.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Marinate Chicken Well: Longer marination leads to more tender and flavorful chicken.

Toast Spices Gently: Cooking the ground spices briefly with the aromatics helps release their full flavor.

Don't Boil Cream: Once the heavy cream is added, only heat it to a gentle simmer; do not bring to a rolling boil, as it can curdle.

Rinse Basmati Rice: Rinsing basmati rice before cooking helps remove excess starch, resulting in fluffier, separate grains.

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