

Tarkari Chickpea Palak Paneer (Spinach & Cheese) with Rice  
Serves 2 as main course (4 sides)

½ cup rice  
1 small-medium toe of garlic, minced  
½ onion, chopped  
¼-½ tsp. ground ginger (or a tsp or so of fresh ginger root sliced very thin and minced)  
¼ tsp turmeric  
2-3 “sprinkles” cayenne  
few sprinkles of garam masala or curry powder  
¼ tsp crushed red peppers (to your liking, this can also be replaced by diced jalapenos)  
2 Roma tomatoes chopped  
1 can chickpeas  
½ c. green peas  
2 cups raw spinach (or kale chopped)  
½ fresh lemon  
½ c. plain yogurt  
½ c. lowfat cottage cheese  
1-2 Tbs olive oil

Combine rice with 1 c. water in saucepan, bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer for 13 minutes (don't open). Turn off heat and remove from burner. Lift lid (being careful not to let water roll into rice), cover lid with “tea towel”, and replace lid with ends of towel tossed over top to keep out of flames...

Heat ½-1 Tbs. olive oil, add all but 1-2 Tbs. onion, garlic, and spices – ginger, turmeric, cayenne, curry powder, red pepper flakes – and sauté until onion is turning brown and spices have released their oils and become very aromatic. Add chopped tomatoes and sauté until bubbly. Add drained chickpeas, green peas, and enough water (¼-½ c or so) to make a sauce. Continue to cook allowing water to evaporate and sauce to thicken – 2-3 minutes.

In second skillet warm ½-1 Tbs. olive oil, sauté remaining onion until clear, add spinach (or kale), squeeze lemon over and cook 2-3 minutes until spinach (or kale) is completely wilted. Turn off heat. Stir yogurt and cottage cheese together, and add on top of spinach (kale). Cover.

Plate by dividing rice into two pasta bowls, topping each with half of chickpea mixture, then spinach and paneer.

Notes:

As with most Indian dishes, this can be sans heat or very fiery. Adding ¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes and a few sprinkles from cayenne bottle is just buzzing to the tongue. If you do not like the heat, cut these back or eliminate.