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by Liz Robb

Bite-sized onion bhajis with cucumber raita



Ingredients

For the raita:
5-6 tablespoons of plain yoghurt
A quarter of a cucumber
1 fat clove of garlic
A handful of fresh mint leaves
Salt and freshly milled black pepper
Cayenne pepper
Fresh coriander for garnish
For the bhajis:
7 tablespoons of gram flour
Salt and black pepper
1 teaspoon of ground cumin
1 teaspoon of ground coriander
1 teaspoon of chilli powder
Half a teaspoon of poppy seeds
1 clove of garlic
1 green chilli
3 onions
Sunflower oil

Preparation

1 To make the cucumber raita:

2 1. Spoon the yoghurt into a bowl. Peel and crush the clove of garlic then peel and chop the cucumber very finely and stir them both into the yoghurt. Chop the mint leaves and mix them in too. Season to taste with salt and black pepper then put the bowl in the fridge to chill.

3 2. Before serving, sprinkle cayenne pepper lightly on the top and garnish with a few sprigs of fresh coriander.

4 To make the onion bhajis:

5 1. Sift the flour into a bowl, along with the cumin, coriander, chilli powder and poppy seeds. Season with salt and black pepper then mix together.

6 2. Add 5 tablespoons of cold water one at a time, stirring to make a thick paste.

7 3. Deseed the green chilli and chop very finely, peel and crush the garlic then add both to the bowl and mix. Peel the onions and slice them really thinly, then stir them into the mixture too, making sure that all of the onion pieces are well separated from each other.

8 4. Heat sunflower oil in a small wok, just deep enough to allow the bhajis to float. It

should be just hot enough for a test piece of the mixture to sizzle and float, but not too hot. Using wet hands, take a teaspoonful of the mixture and form it into a rough ball shape with your fingers and drop it gently into the hot oil. Repeat, cooking 5 or 6 small bhajis at a time, turning gently. Fry for a just a couple of minutes, until the outside is golden brown and the inside is cooked, then lift out with a slotted spoon and leave to drain on kitchen towel.

9 These taste good hot or cold, with a spoonful of the cucumber raita to cool the spicy heat, or with Indian pickles. You can cook them well ahead of time and quickly heat them in the oven when you want them.

Cooks Note

These little spicy snacks with a cool yoghurt dip make perfect canapés for parties, or to add to a buffet table, or can be served as a simple first course to an Indian meal.