This opulent and rich dal became one of North India’s most popular dishes during the period of partition in 1947 as Punjabis migrated across borders and took flight with this recipe reminding them of their roots. It’s a significant dish with a big reputation!
Black Dal (Punjab) Vegan

SERVES 6

300g black urid lentils
150g butter or ghee
(or 3 tablespoons coconut oil for a vegan alternative)
2 white onions (halved and thinly sliced)
4 garlic cloves (crushed)
2 tsp ground cumin
Ginger thumb-sized piece
(peeled and finely chopped)
2 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp ground turmeric
1 tsp paprika
¼ tsp chilli powder

400g passata or chopped tomatoes
Small bunch coriander
(plus stalks finely chopped, leaves reserved to serve)
1 fat red chilli (pierced a few times
with the tip of a sharp knife)
100ml double cream (or extra thick
coconut cream for a vegan alternative)

Soak the lentils in cold water for 2+ hrs
Melt the butter or ghee in a large pan,
then add the onions, garlic and ginger,
and cook slowly for 10-15 mins until the
onions are starting to caramelise. Stir in
the spices, coriander and stalks and 100ml
water. Cook over a medium heat and add
the passata and whole red chilli.

Drain the lentils and add these too, then
top up with 600ml water. Season well,
cover and cook for 2 hrs over a very low
heat on the hob, stirring occasionally to
stop the lentils from sticking to the pan.

Once cooked, the dal should be very thick
and the lentils tender. Stir in the cream
and check the seasoning.

Garnish with a swirl of cream.

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