

Dad's Rajmah

SLOW COOKER SIZE: **5-QUART** • COOKING TIME: **10 HOURS ON HIGH, 2 HOURS ON LOW** • YIELD: **10 CUPS (2.37 L)**

My father grew up in Bhikhi, a small village surrounded by fields of mustard greens and wheat in the northern agricultural state of Punjab in India. The residents of the region love their food fresh, spicy, and dripping with *ghee*. Most work so hard in the fields that butter is not considered a health hazard. In fact, villagers are encouraged to eat as much butter as possible to increase their physical strength.

Though he raised a family in the United States, my father never lost his taste for authentic and spicy Indian foods. This is his recipe for *rajmah*. Don't be intimidated by all the chili peppers and garlic. They are tempered as the beans break down into a fabulously creamy base.

Skeptical at first, I did ask Dad to verify the amount of chili and all he said was, "for spicy people, it's no big deal." So, if you are one of these "spicy people" or just like an adventure, try this recipe. Just keep a cold drink handy.

3 cups (603 g) dried red kidney beans, cleaned and washed thoroughly

1 medium yellow or red onion, peeled and chopped

1 (2-inch [5 cm]) piece ginger, peeled and chopped

12 cloves garlic, peeled and chopped

8–10 green Thai, serrano, or cayenne chilies, stems removed, chopped

¼ cup (59 mL) tomato paste

2 tablespoons (30 mL) cumin seeds

2 tablespoons (30 mL) salt

2 teaspoons (10 mL) turmeric powder

2 teaspoons (10 mL) red chili powder

4 tablespoons (60 mL) unsalted butter

12 cups (2.84 L) water

2 tablespoons (30 mL) fresh cilantro, chopped

1. Put the kidney beans, onion, ginger, garlic, green chilies, tomato paste, cumin, salt, turmeric, red chili powder, butter, and water in the slow cooker.

2. Cook on high for 10 hours. Turn the slow cooker to low and cook for another 2 hours.

3. When it's done cooking, add the cilantro.

4. Serve over basmati or brown rice with a plate of raw onions doused with fresh lemon juice and *raita* on the side.

To make this dish in a 3½-quart slow cooker, halve all the ingredients and proceed with the recipe. A half recipe makes 5 cups (1.18 L).