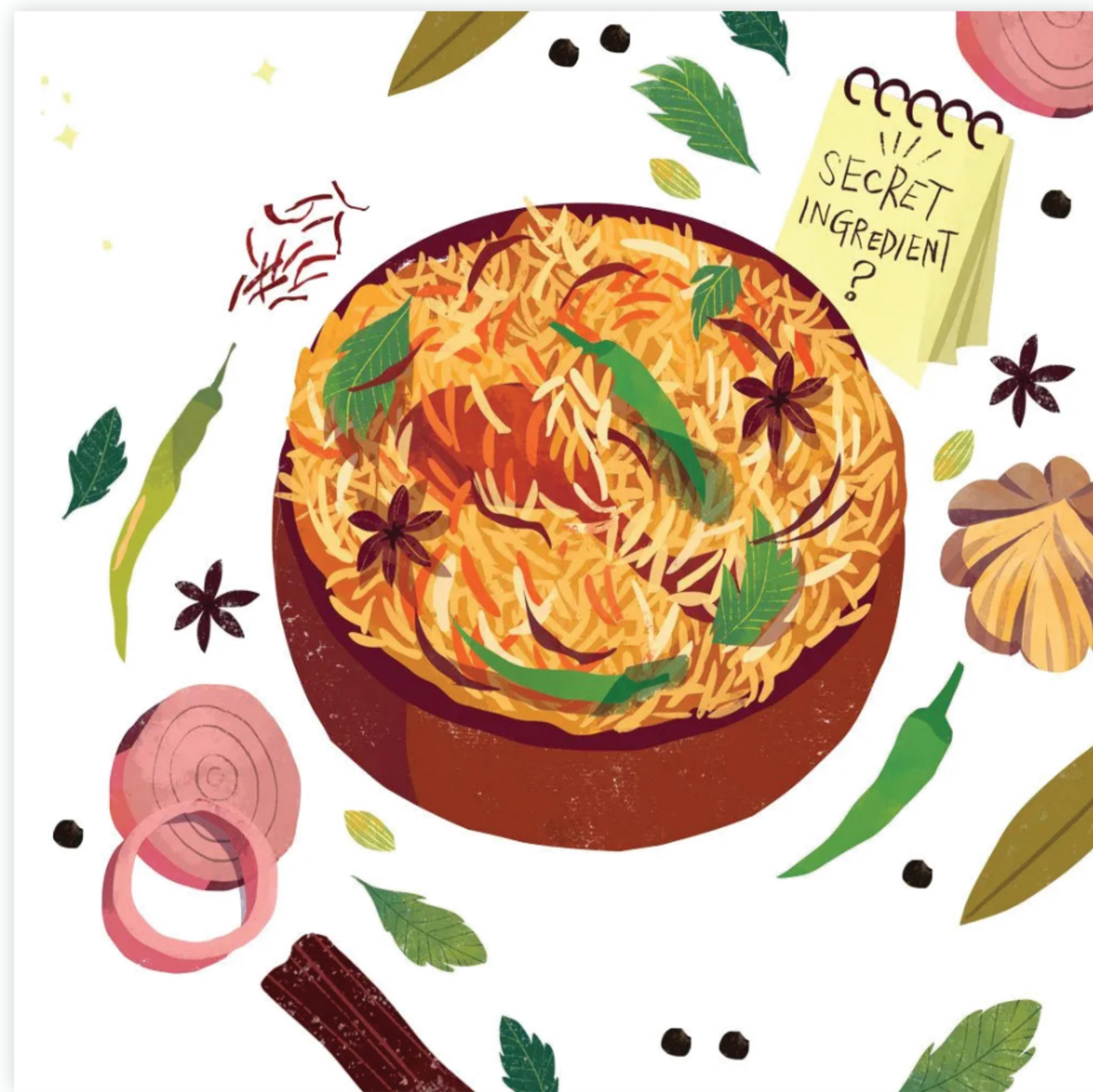


Chicken Biryani



Anni's Chicken Biryani Recipe

From Namita's upcoming book *"Anni Dreams of Biryani"*


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Okay, so this isn't the recipe that Uncle makes, but it's pretty close . . . and it's super delicious! Typically, the chicken in biryani is eaten on the bone and leg meat is more tender than breast meat, but you can even add smaller boneless chicken pieces of breast or thigh if you prefer. Biryani is typically eaten with a side known as kachumber, which is made by chopping equal amounts of onion, tomato, and cucumber, then adding a few tablespoons of yogurt and salt.

 Time: 1 hour plus minimum 1 hour for marinating

 Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients

For the marinade

- 6 tablespoons Greek yogurt
- 2 tablespoons **biryani masala**
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ginger paste
- 1 teaspoon garlic paste
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 1 green chilli (omit if cooking for kids, or scoop out the seeds and wash thoroughly—this allows you to still get the flavour of green chilli but not the heat)
- 2 pounds skinless chicken (leg and thigh pieces, with or without bone)
- ½ cup fresh coriander, chopped
- ¼ cup fresh mint leaves, chopped

For the rice

- 4 litres water
- 1 tablespoon oil (you can use the oil from frying the onions)
- 2 cloves
- 2 green cardamom pods
- 1 stick of cinnamon
- 1 bay leaf
- 6 peppercorns
- 2 teaspoons salt
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 3 cups basmati rice

For the fried onions, aka “birista”

- 250 millilitres vegetable oil for deep frying
- 4 medium red onions, sliced thin

For the chicken curry

- 4 tablespoons ghee
- 4 green cardamom pods
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 2 cloves
- 1 small stick of cinnamon
- 6 black peppercorns
- 2–3 pureed tomatoes, or 1 cup passata

For the assembly

- A pinch of saffron (soaked in 2 tablespoons warm milk)
- 2–3 potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 tablespoon ghee
- Handful of mint leaves for garnish

Equipment

A Dutch oven or a deep, medium-size pot to cook the biryani in, with a heavy base and a tight-fitting lid

Instructions



1. In a glass or metal bowl, mix the yogurt, **biryani masala**, and salt. Add in the ginger and garlic paste. Squeeze in the lemon juice. Add the green chilli (if using). Stir in the chicken pieces. Mix and sprinkle in the fresh coriander and mint. Set aside to marinate for at least 1 hour in the fridge or overnight preferably.
2. Wash the basmati rice thoroughly in several changes of water and soak in fresh water for a minimum of 30 minutes.
3. Fry the onions until deep brown (almost burnt) and drain on kitchen paper in a single layer. You can do this in batches depending on the size of your frying pot, or you could fry them in one big batch if you have a big, deep wok. The fried onions should be cooked crisp, 10–15 minutes per batch. You could also buy ready-made fried onions, but they should ideally be a dark brown color.
4. For the chicken curry, heat the ghee in a heavy-bottomed pot and add the green cardamom pods, cumin seeds, cloves, cinnamon, and black peppercorns, and stir for a few minutes. Add in the pureed tomato and cook for 5–7 minutes. Add the marinated chicken (along with the marinade) and half the fried onions (crushing them first with your hands). Stir and cook on high for 4–5 minutes. Then cover and cook for 12–15 minutes on low, or until the chicken is almost done.

5. Meanwhile, prepare the rice. Bring the water to a boil. Add in the oil and salt. Then add in the whole spices in a muslin pouch or in a closed tea strainer / infuser so you can easily pull them out later. Add in the lemon juice and the rice. Cook for 6 minutes on high. The rice should be cooked about 70 percent through. Drain out the water and set aside the parboiled rice. Save 1 cup of the rice water.
6. Soak the saffron in warm milk.
7. In a stockpot / biryani pot / deep Dutch oven, place a single layer of the potatoes, then add the chicken curry. Pour in all the parboiled rice and smooth the top.
8. Over the top of the rice, add the ghee and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the rice water. Pour in the saffron-soaked milk and strands. Add the remaining fried onions (leave a handful of crisp ones for the final garnish).
9. Seal the biryani pot with foil and cover with a lid. Add a weight to the lid if necessary to ensure a tight seal. Cook on low for 20–25 minutes, or until the rice is fully cooked.
10. Remove the lid and foil seal. Carefully spoon out all the biryani, and serve! Make sure you serve equal amounts of rice, curry, and potato. Sprinkle the biryani with the remaining fried onions and fresh mint leaves.

