



### Spinach and Feta Cooked Like Saag Paneer

Featured on July 13, 2019 for “Priya Krishna’s ‘Indian-ish’ Recipes” demo with Priya Krishna

*“Here’s a familiar Indian takeout staple – saag paneer – but with the ingenious substitution of large cubes of feta for paneer (a bit of inspiration from our 1998 family trip to Athens and near continuous consumption of Greek salads, which in Greece are just... salads). The first time I tasted it, it was like when I discovered you can do the 9 times table with your fingers in third grade, which is to say, I just about lost it. Not only is my mom’s spinach gravy infinitely more complex than that of most versions of saag paneer (I have been known to steal sauce swipes out of the pan when my mom isn’t looking), but I also love the way the feta gets all soft and pseudo-baked, soaking in all the spices and melting a little into the gravy. And then you hit the pan with the oiled-up cumin and red chile powder, which add a whole other level of richness. I would go as far as to say that I now want all future saag paneer I eat to be made with feta. And I bet you will, too.” – Priya Krishna, Indian-ish, pg. 83*

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#### Ingredients

- ¼ cup + 2 tablespoons ghee or olive oil, divided
- 2 tablespoons coriander seeds
- 2 green cardamom pods, or ¼ teaspoon ground cardamom (freshly ground is best)
- 1 small yellow onion, diced into ½-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon roughly chopped fresh ginger
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 pound fresh baby spinach (10 to 12 cups)
- ½ tablespoon fresh lime juice (from about a quarter of a lime), plus more if needed
- 1 small Indian green chile or serrano chile, roughly chopped
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 6 ounces feta cheese, cut into ½-inch cubes (a little over ½ cup)
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- ¼ teaspoon asafetida (optional, but really great)
- ¼ teaspoon red chile powder

#### Directions

In a large pan over medium heat, warm ¼ cup of the ghee (or oil). Once the ghee has melted (or the oil begins to shimmer), add the coriander and cardamom and cook, stirring, for about 2 minutes, until the seeds start to brown. Add the onion and cook until it is translucent, 5 to 6 minutes. Stir in the ginger and garlic and cook for 1 minute more. Add the spinach and cook until it is just wilted, 4 to 5 minutes.

Remove the pan from the heat and add the lime juice, green chile, and salt. Let cool for 5 minutes. Transfer to a blender and blend into a chunky paste. Return the spinach mixture to the same pan and

set it over low heat. Stir in ½ cup of water, then gently fold in the feta, being careful not to break up the cubes. Cook for 5 to 7 minutes more to soften the feta slightly and allow it to soak up some of the spinach sauce.

While the feta cooks, in a small pan or butter warmer over medium-high heat, warm the remaining 2 tablespoons ghee (or oil) for 1 minute. Add the cumin seeds. As soon as (emphasis on *as soon as* – you don't want your cumin to burn!) the cumin seeds start to sputter and brown, about 1 minute max, remove the pan from the heat. Immediately add the asafetida (if using) and red chile powder.

Pour all of the ghee (or oil) mixture into the spinach and feta once that is done cooking.

Serve with rice or roti.



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