Chicken Biryani (Chennai Style)

Serves 4
Prep time: 30 minutes
Cook time: 1 hour

Ingredients:

- ☐ Oil – 1 cup (canola or vegetable)
- ☐ Clove – 2
- ☐ Bay leaf – 1
- ☐ Cardamom pod – 2
- ☐ Cinnamon stick – 1 inch
- ☐ Red onion (Julienne or half-moon slices) – 3 cups
- ☐ Thai green chilies (chopped) – 2
- ☐ Ginger garlic paste – 2 heaping tablespoons
- ☐ Mint leaves – 1 small bunch
- ☐ Tomato (chopped) – 1 cup
- ☐ Turmeric powder – ½ teaspoon
- ☐ Red chili powder – 2 teaspoons
- ☐ Salt – 1 ½ teaspoons
- ☐ Chicken breast OR thigh – 1 lb
- ☐ Basmati rice – 3 cups
- ☐ Juice from ½ a lime
- ☐ Cilantro leaves (for garnish)
- ☐ Saffron food coloring – 1 pinch (optional)
- ☐ Yogurt/ plain kefir – 3 tablespoons (optional)

Prep steps:

1. Cut the chicken breast or thighs into 1-inch pieces.

2. (Optional) Add 3 tablespoons of yogurt or plain kefir and marinade for 15 minutes.

3. Pick just the mint leaves from the stems and wash them thoroughly.

4. Julienne the onions, chop the tomatoes and green chilies and set aside.

Cooking steps:

1. In a big sauté pan with medium heat, add oil.

2. Add clove, Bay leaf, cardamom pod, cinnamon stick when the pan gets hot.

3. Add the sliced onions and the chopped green chilies to the pan and sauté until the onion softens.

4. Add mint leaves and sauté until it shrinks.

5. Add the ginger garlic paste and sauté for 2-3 minutes.

6. Add the chopped tomatoes and sauté.

7. Add the turmeric powder, red chili powder, and salt and mix well.

8. Add the chopped chicken pieces and mix well. Add water until the pieces are just about fully immersed in the pan. Close and cook in medium heat for 20 minutes, mixing the mixture every 5 minutes.

9. Wash the basmati rice and add it to a pressure cooker. Add 5 cups of water (1:1.67 ratio between rice and water).

10. Transfer the contents from the pan into the pressure cooker and mix well.

11. Squeeze ½ lime juice into the pressure cooker.

12. Close the lid and add the whistle to the cooker. Set it in medium heat and wait for 3 whistles, then switch off the stove and wait for the pressure to release.

13. Once the pressure is fully released, open the lid and check if the rice and chicken are fully cooked. Add salt if necessary.

14. (Optional) Add a pinch of saffron food coloring and mix well.

15. Add chopped cilantro leaves for garnish.

16. Serve hot with raita.