

Pumpkin with ginger, coconut milk and lime

No pumpkin to be found? Then any of the firm-fleshed squashes, such as butternut, will be fine, though steamed rice is pretty much essential. This is a dish that really will improve with a day in the fridge. Serves 4, with rice.

2 medium onions
3 tbsp groundnut oil
a large lump of ginger, about 60g
3 small, very hot chillies
3 stalks of lemongrass
2 tsp ground turmeric
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp ground coriander
800g tomatoes
400ml vegetable stock (or water at a push)
1.5kg pumpkin or butternut squash
250ml coconut milk
the juice of a plump lime
a small handful of coriander leaves
a small handful of mint leaves

Peel the onions and chop them roughly. Cook them slowly with the oil in a deep, heavy-based saucepan. They should be soft, but relatively uncoloured. While they soften, peel the ginger and shred the flesh into fine matchsticks; seed and finely chop the chillies; peel and discard the outer leaves of the lemongrass, then very finely slice the soft inner core. Add the ginger, chillies and lemongrass to the onions and continue cooking for five minutes. Stir in the turmeric, cumin and coriander.

Chop the tomatoes roughly and stir into the onions. Let them soften for five to seven minutes or so, stirring the mixture so it doesn't burn, then pour in the stock. Bring to the boil then turn down to a gentle simmer. Peel the pumpkin or squash, scrape out the seeds and fibres, cut the flesh into large chunks (4 or 5cm in size if they are not to break up) and season with salt and pepper. Lower the squash into the pot and simmer for 20-25 minutes, checking now and again for tenderness. It's a fine line between tender squash and squishy squash.

Stir in the coconut milk, gently so as not to smash the squash, and cook for a couple of minutes. Check the seasoning, then stir in the lime juice, coriander and mint. Serve with the rice.