

Keralan Karavan | Chef Krish

Makhani Sauce Base

(Perfect for a Family of 4)

Yield: ~1 Litre | **Prep:** 15 Mins | **Cook:** 45-60 Mins

Ingredients

1. Base Boil

- Tomatoes (chopped): 1.2 kg
- Onions (sliced): 180g (1-2)
- Garlic (whole cloves): 30g
- Ginger (chopped): 30g
- Cashew Nuts: 30g
- Water: 600 ml
- Butter: 10g
- Salt: 7g - 11g

2. Spice Bag (Potli)

- Bay Leaves: 2 pcs
- Cinnamon Sticks: 1-2 pcs
- Green Cardamom: 3 pods
- Black Cardamom: 1 pod
- Cloves: 3-4 pcs
- Black Peppercorns: 2g (½ tsp)
- Coriander Seeds: 1g (½ tsp)
- Cumin Seeds: 1g (½ tsp)
- Mace (Javitri): A pinch

3. Tempering & Finishing

- Butter (Divided 50g/30g): 80g total
- Oil: 11g
- Ginger-Garlic Paste: 9g
- Kashmiri Red Chilli: 9.5g
- Garam Masala: 3g
- Kasoori Methi / Fenugreek: 1g
- Honey (or Sugar): 17g
- Heavy Fresh Cream: 100 ml

Step-by-Step Method

1. Boiling the Base Place all the whole spices into a cheesecloth or a large tea infuser and tie securely. In a medium pot, combine the tomatoes, onions, garlic, ginger, cashews, 10g butter, salt, and water. Submerge the spice potli. Bring to a boil, cover, and let simmer gently for **45 to 60 minutes**. The cashews and tomatoes must be completely mushy.

2. Blending and Straining Remove the spice potli and discard. Allow the mixture to cool slightly (if using a countertop blender, blend in batches and vent the lid!). Blend into an absolutely fine, smooth paste. *Critical Step:* Pass the puree through a fine-mesh strainer into a clean bowl, pressing with a ladle. This ensures that signature shiny, silky restaurant texture.

3. Tempering (Tadka) In a clean pot, heat the oil and 50g of butter. Add ginger-garlic paste and sauté for 1 minute. Lower heat, add Kashmiri chili powder and garam masala. Stir for 30 seconds to bloom, then **immediately** pour in the strained puree to stop the spices from burning.

4. Simmer & Finish Simmer on low for 10–15 minutes until the fat separates slightly on top. Crush the Kasoori Methi between your palms and sprinkle it in. Turn off the heat. Stir in the honey, heavy cream, and the remaining 30g of butter until melted and luscious.

Optional: The Dhungar Smoke

Float a small foil cup on top of the sauce. Heat a small piece of natural charcoal until glowing red, place it in the foil, and pour 1 tsp of oil over it. Cover tightly for 5 minute

How to Use This Sauce Base

This recipe yields a rich, versatile "mother sauce." Here are a few ways to turn it into a complete meal:

- **Paneer Makhani:** Lightly pan-fry 400g of paneer cubes until golden, then fold them into the simmering sauce. Let it warm through for 3-4 minutes so the paneer softens and absorbs the flavours.
- **Vegetable Makhani:** Roast a mix of cauliflower florets, bell peppers, and carrots. Toss the roasted veggies and a handful of green peas into the warm sauce.
- **Chicken Makhani :** Marinate Chicken thighs in yogurt, chilli powder, ginger & garlic paste, and chaat masala (optional) for 2 hrs. Grill the chicken in a pan or oven and pour the makhani sauce over it