



MARION - ESSENTIAL - BRISTOL

I'm Marion – one of the Sales Reps here at Essential.

I've worked here for 10 years now. Starting at Harvest in Bath and moving to Essential 3 years ago.

Working in a cooperative is like nothing else – it's really challenged me to be a better human over the years and I've learned so much about human nature. When I look at how other companies operate it blows my mind that cooperation isn't a priority. It just makes sense for the greater good of society in general.

There are obviously good days and bad but it balances out to be worth it.

Outside of my work here I'm a signwriter, mostly painting boats. I live on board

a 41' narrowboat which I cruise between Bristol and the Wiltshire countryside with a cat named Ella.

My family is from Guyana and although it's in South America, the population comprises people of African, Indian, Chinese and Portuguese descent. Along with the Indigenous culture and strong Caribbean influences - all of those cultures show up together in the cuisine!

Big communal meals are a huge part of life for us and for the purpose of this recipe book I have adapted my wonderful Grandma's Dhal recipe to feed 4 people instead of 20!



## Guyanese Dhal

1/2 cup red split lentils (More lentils if you prefer a thick dhal - we tend to make it like a runny like a soup)  
2 cups water generous pinch of salt  
1/2 block of creamed coconut  
Tbsp cumin seeds  
Tsp cloves  
Tsp turmeric  
3 pods of star anis  
2 or 3 Fresh birds eye chillies  
5 or six cloves of fresh garlic  
1 tsp vegan bouillon powder or stock  
Fresh coriander to garnish  
2 tbsp coconut oil or similar - i like rapeseed oil as its not too strong in flavour.

Rinse the lentils then put them in a saucepan to boil and the. Simmer for about 20minutes - use a spoon to scoop away any foam which forms on the surface of the water.

Add the salt, and the bouillon while it is simmering.

Once the lentils are soft, roughly chop up the coconut block and add it in to the lentils (there should still be some water - add more if the lentils start to boil dry).

Leave the lentills simmering on a low setting, stirring occasionally to ensure the coconut block has dissolved

Add the turmeric

Put the coconut oil along with the cumin seeds, the cloves and the star anis in a metal ladle and carefully hold the bowl of the ladle of the hob flame (Make sure its on the lowest setting - this can be done in a small saucepan or frying pan instead if you dont feel confident heating oil in a ladle)

Eventually you'll see the cumin seeds



start to darken and small bubbles will start to form in the oil.

Once its heated through really well, pour the oil with the whole spices in to the dhal - this might spit and bubble fiercely so use an oven glove and stand well back. This method infuses the spices into the dhal really well. Stir it carefully and slowly as it lmay still spit a little

Chop your chillies and slice your garlic carefully and add them.

Leave to simmer for 5 more minutes to allow the garlic to soften but still taste fresh and then serve as a simple yet filling meal poured over basmati rice, or as a side dish to any curry.

I like to add chopped coriander but this isn't necessarily traditional. In Guyana it's served in cafes, in a chipped mug with fresh roti at breakfast time.