

# Journalist Report Day 05 TasMars2013

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## A culinary guide to Mars part two

When I began to sort my way through the pantry, I realised that I probably wasn't the first person to make curry on Mars. Among the 10 different varieties of chili in the pantry (powders, sauces and dried) was a substantial bag of Indian chili powder. As well as the chili powder, on one of the highest shelves I found a labelled container of moong dal (split mung beans). While possibly part of the standard Mars supplies, it was more likely that this combination indicated previous curry enthusiasts at MDRS.

For my first Mars curry, I decided to use the moong dal. I like to speed up dal cooking, and so at lunchtime I put the dal in a bowl and poured boiling water over it. By dinner time it had softened slightly, although I still found it quite slow to cook. My favourite dal is masoor dal (split red lentils) which seem to be the fastest cooking. It's not a matter of taste, it's just that I'm impatient for my dinner!

I made a tomato-based spice paste (that is, a mix of spices, onion and tomato) and used the combination of tomato powder and diced tomato that is rapidly becoming my staple. The spices were one of the most typical combinations – turmeric, cumin, coriander seed and chili. Coriander seed is one of my favourite spices, and it is also just about the easiest to grow in the home garden. Most people I know who try to grow coriander report that it is very difficult, because it always bolts. Coriander does tend to do this whenever the temperatures fluctuate – but all is not lost! It can be left to go to seed and then the delicious seeds saved as a home grown spice. Possibly something to try in the greenhab now that I think about it.

I added green beans to the curry and served it with rice. I also tried making up a little of the dried sour cream since I haven't made the yoghurt yet. I was muttering to myself about the balance of spices – as I tend to never be quite satisfied – but I was very pleased with the green beans. They went really well with it. It turns out I had wildly miscalculated on the volume of dal, cooking enough for twice the number of crew members, but there was quite a demand for seconds. Plus, we were pretty tired after the filming the following day, and we made good use of the leftovers.

The only thing that didn't work so well from that meal was the sour cream – at the end of the meal it was still sitting on the table largely untouched. But the sour cream was to have its moment later!

Today we got home rather late after visiting some of the geological features in the local area. We were cold and tired and it was the perfect opportunity for a nice hearty soup. So I grabbed the dried leeks, dried sliced potatoes and potato powder and made leek and potato soup in 10 minutes. This is where dehydrated vegetables come into their own. At home, I grow almost all my own vegetables, and most of my recipes effectively begin: go into the garden and pick your vegetables. I wouldn't be managing a 10 minute soup at home. Plus, there are two large tins of potato powder open, and I thought I should use some.

The soup needed a little extra something, and so I finished the jar of "cozinhe" (dried parsley) and stirred in some sour cream. That really did the trick!

Tomorrow, I'm thinking about the three enormous containers of dried spinach. Either it's so popular that huge quantities need to be stocked, or it's not the favourite vegetable of the MDRS crews. But I had an inspiration – there's a particularly delicious Indian curry made with spinach puree – saag. I think there are just enough spicy sprouts in the greenhab to top off the curry, so that will be an exciting moment for me tomorrow.

ENDS.