Dal Makhani

Ingredients:

Black lentils - 500g
Garlic - 1 (medium sized)
Butter - 250g
Tomato puree - 500 ml (the watery kind, not the paste that comes in a tube. Ensure that there are no herbs in the puree. If not, blend 4 large tomatoes into a smooth puree)
Ghee - 4 to 5 tbsp
Ginger garlic paste - 3 to 4 tsp
Kasuri Methi - 4 to 5 tsp
Kashmiri Chilli powder - 5-6 tsp

Recipe:

Soak the lentils in cold water at least overnight, preferably for 2 nights in a refrigerator. There should be sufficient water for the lentils to swell (they double in size).

Step 1: About an hour to 1.5 hours of slow cooking

1. Peel and chop the garlic into small pieces, and add them to a cup of lukewarm water. Let it rest for half an hour.
2. Wash the soaked lentils and add them to a large pot. Add enough water so that the lentils stay submerged.
3. Add just the water from the soaked garlic - you can use the chopped garlic pieces for something else. There should be no pieces of garlic in the dal makhani.
4. When the water with lentils starts to boil, there is a lot of froth formation on the top. Skim it off from time to time. It affects the flavour of the dal makhani.
5. Once the water stops frothing, add 125 g of butter to the pot and let it cook.

Step 2: Mix in the tomato puree (cook for another 1 hour)

1. Heat up 1-2 tbsp of ghee and add ginger garlic paste.
2. Once the raw smell of the paste is completely eliminated (this is very important; otherwise the makhani will smell garlicky), add 2-3 tsp Kashmiri chilli powder and the tomato puree.
3. After the raw smell of tomato is eliminated, add this mixture to the pot of lentils. Ensure that there is just about enough water for the lentils to cook properly.
4. Add the rest of the butter (125 g).

Step 3: Final Tempering

1. Heat up 2-3 tbsp of ghee and add the kasuri methi leaves to it.
2. Once the leaves are toasted, add 2-3 tsp of Kashmiri chilli powder and immediately transfer the mixture to the pot of lentils. At this stage, ensure that the dal is somewhat spicier than desired.

After another 45 minutes to 1 hour, add about 1 full cup of thick cream and reduce the heat to minimal (or switch off). Serve with a small chip of butter and swirl of cream on top.

It is expected to take about 3-4 hours for Dal makhani to cook properly. Ensure that the lentils are thoroughly cooked before eating; they can cause indigestion otherwise.