

Ethiopian Shiro Wat (Chickpea Stew) — Gluten-Free

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp oil (olive oil or niter kibbeh/clarified butter)
- 1 medium onion, very finely minced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp grated fresh ginger (optional but recommended)
- 1 tbsp berbere spice (use a gluten-free blend)
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 3 cups water or gluten-free vegetable broth
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup very fine chickpea flour (or shiro powder if you have it)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt (plus more to taste)
- 1 tbsp butter or ghee at the end (optional)
- To serve: hot rice or 100% teff injera (must be 100% teff to stay gluten-free)

Instructions (step by step)

1. Prep your base: Put a medium pot on medium heat. Add the oil. When it looks glossy, add the minced onion with a small pinch of salt. Cook 5–6 minutes, stirring often, until the onion turns soft and slightly golden—no browning/burning.
2. Add aromatics: Stir in the garlic and ginger. Cook 30–45 seconds, just until fragrant. Do not let the garlic brown (it will taste bitter).
3. Bloom the spice: Add the berbere. Stir constantly for 30 seconds so the spices heat in the oil. This releases flavor. If the pan looks dry, add 1–2 tsp oil so the spice doesn't scorch.
4. Tomato base: Add the tomato paste. Cook 60–90 seconds, pressing it into the pan to darken slightly. This removes raw acidity and builds a richer base.
5. Add liquid: Pour in the water or broth. Stir well and bring to a gentle simmer (small bubbles), not a rapid boil.
6. Whisk in chickpea flour without lumps: Lower the heat to medium-low. Hold a whisk in one

hand and slowly sprinkle in the chickpea flour with the other hand in a thin rain. Whisk the entire time so it dissolves smoothly. (If you dump it in, it will clump.)

7. Simmer to thicken: Keep the heat on low to medium-low. Simmer 10–12 minutes, whisking every 1–2 minutes, until the stew is smooth and creamy and lightly coats a spoon. If it's too thick, whisk in a little more hot water (2–3 tbsp at a time). If it's too thin, simmer a few minutes more.
8. Season and finish: Stir in $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp salt. Taste. Add more salt if needed. If you want a silkier finish, stir in 1 tbsp butter or ghee now. Turn off the heat and let it sit 2 minutes—this helps it settle.
9. Serve: Spoon into bowls. Serve with hot rice or 100% teff injera. Add a simple side salad or sautéed greens if you want.

Benefits

- Chickpea flour provides plant protein and fiber (helps fullness and steady energy).

- Naturally gluten-free when using GF berbere and broth; served with rice or 100% teff injera.
- Warm spices (berbere) deliver flavor without heavy sauces or gluten thickeners.

Notes

- Texture control: Shiro should be creamy, not paste-thick. Adjust with small splashes of hot water.
- Spice level: Berbere heat varies. Start with 1 tbsp; add ½–1 tsp more at the end if you want it spicier.
- Storage: Refrigerate up to 4 days. It thickens in the fridge—whisk in a little water while reheating over low heat.