

Red curry with chicken

This is one of my favourite curries as it has everything in one mouthful: roasted meat, spices, heat, herbs such as Thai basil, then the sourness of pineapple and tamarind. It is a delicious combination of flavours.

serves 4–6

preparation 5 minutes

cooking 10 minutes

fresh

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

1 portion of Red curry paste (see page 223)

3 grilled skinless and boneless chicken breasts

½ fresh pineapple, peeled and cut into chunks

6 cherry tomatoes, halved

4 Thai basil sprigs (or use regular basil), leaves picked

1 large red chilli, seeded and finely chopped, to serve

4 cm piece of ginger, peeled and thinly sliced into matchsticks, to serve

pantry/larder

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

250 ml coconut cream

1 tablespoon fish sauce

1 teaspoon grated palm sugar

1. Heat the oil in a heavy-based pan over medium–high heat. Fry the garlic until golden brown, then stir in the curry paste and heat through. Add the coconut cream, stirring constantly, and bring to the boil.
2. Turn down the heat. Add the fish sauce and palm sugar and simmer for 5 minutes.
3. Add the grilled chicken and coat in the sauce. Add the pineapple and tomatoes and stir in the Thai basil. Garnish with chopped red chilli and ginger and serve with rice or noodles.

Page 223: Red curry paste

This is a classic red curry paste that can be used for many types of curry, from fish or prawns to roasted duck.

serves 6

preparation 15 minutes

cooking 40 minutes

fresh

5 red chillies, seeded and finely chopped

2 lemongrass stems, tough outer leaves removed and stems chopped

4 cm piece of ginger, peeled and finely chopped

4 garlic cloves

6 coriander roots, washed and chopped

3 red onions, coarsely chopped

1 red capsicum, chopped

4 kaffir lime leaves

juice of 2 limes

spices

½ teaspoon ground white pepper

2 teaspoons ground turmeric

pantry/larder

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 teaspoon prawn paste (see page 18)

1 teaspoon salt

660 ml coconut cream

2 tablespoons fish sauce

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Mix all of the fresh ingredients, except the kaffir lime leaves and lime juice, together in a bowl and add 1 tablespoon of the vegetable oil. Line a baking tray with baking paper and spread out the mixed fresh ingredients on the tray.
3. Spoon the prawn paste into one corner of the tray: it is very pungent when it is raw, but turns nutty and savoury once roasted. Roast in the oven for 8 minutes until the ingredients are fragrant and aromatic and starting to caramelize.
4. Remove the tray from the oven, then place the roasted ingredients in a food processor or blender. Purée all the ingredients with the salt and white pepper until smooth. Start with the most fibrous and hard ingredients: purée the lemongrass, ginger and coriander roots first, then add the remaining roasted ingredients. Add 100 ml of water to loosen the paste.
5. To cook the paste, heat the remaining oil in a heavy-based frying pan over medium–high heat. Cook the mixture slowly for about 20 minutes, stirring regularly to avoid sticking. Add the turmeric and kaffir lime leaves and cook for about 20 minutes until aromatic and fragrant. Add the coconut cream and simmer until reduced by half. Add the fish sauce and lime juice and mix through.
6. Divide the paste into 3 portions. It is now ready for other ingredients, such as meat, fish or vegetables to be added to it (see page 156) or to be frozen for future use.

Tip: It's important not to add the turmeric to the food processor or blender as it will dye everything yellow! Only add the turmeric when you are cooking the paste.

***Thai Food Made Easy* by Tom Kime (Murdoch Books, £14.99). Photography by Lisa Linder.**