

The King of Siam's Massaman Curry

Courtesy of Tasting History with Max Miller

Ingredients

Curry Paste

- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 2 teaspoons cumin seeds
- 1 tablespoon grated coconut
- 4 cloves
- 1 teaspoon cardamom seeds (from cardamom pods*)
- 3 tablespoons chopped shallots
- 6 to 7 cloves of garlic
- 1 tablespoon chopped lemongrass
- 1 tablespoon peeled and sliced galangal
- 7 chilies*, dried or fresh, seeds removed
- 1 teaspoon shrimp paste

Curry

- 2 pounds (1 kg) chicken thigh or beef, cut into 1 1/2" pieces.
- 2-3 tablespoons coconut oil
- 1/2 cup coconut cream*
- 2 cups coconut milk (canned)
- 1/4 cup unsalted roasted peanuts
- 1 stick cassia cinnamon
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- 3 tablespoons (50 g) palm sugar
- 3 tablespoons tamarind juice
- 1/2 cup shallots, chopped
- 3 bay leaves
- 3 slices of peeled ginger, about 1/8" thick

Directions

1. **For the curry paste:** Put the coriander seeds, cumin seeds, grated coconut, cloves, and cardamom seeds into a dry pan over medium heat, stirring constantly, for about 3 to 4 minutes or until it is fragrant and the coconut is lightly browned. Remove from the pan and let cool.
2. Grind the spice mixture into a powder in a spice grinder or very clean coffee grinder, then set aside.
3. Remove the seeds from the chilies, wearing gloves if desired to protect hands from the spice. Roughly chop the chilies.
4. Add the shallots, garlic, lemongrass, galangal, and chilies to a dry pan over medium-high and cook, stirring constantly until the ingredients develop a bit of char.
5. Add the chilies mixture to a mortar and pestle grind with the shrimp paste. This will take a while and is best done by hand in order to properly release the oils.
6. Add the spice mixture and continue to grind until it is as smooth as you can get (it won't be completely smooth).
7. **For the curry:** Melt the coconut oil in a pan over medium heat and add the chicken. Cook until browned and set aside.
8. While the chicken cooks, pour the coconut cream into a separate pan over medium heat and simmer until the oil separates out (cracking).
9. Once you see oil bubbles on the surface of the cream, it has cracked. Add the curry paste and stir until fragrant, about 2 minutes.
10. Add the coconut milk and bring to a simmer.
11. Add the chicken, peanuts, and cinnamon stick. Simmer until the chicken is tender, about 30 to 45 minutes.
12. Add fish sauce, palm sugar, tamarind juice, shallots, and bay leaves. Simmer on low for 1 hour. It will darken as it cooks.
13. Taste and adjust seasonings if needed, then take it off the heat and add the ginger.
14. Cover and put in the fridge overnight to develop the flavors, or serve it forth right away with rice.

Notes

- Cardamom will typically be white, or Siam, cardamom, but green or black work just fine.
- As this dish isn't meant to be spicy, don't use small Thai chilies. Any mild chili will work, just remove the seeds and you're good to go.
- Be sure to get coconut cream that doesn't contain any emulsifiers, or this won't work (the only ingredient should be coconut cream). I used Aroy-D brand, but be sure to read the ingredients list. If this is unavailable to you, you can add some coconut oil to the cream, it just won't taste quite the same.

