

AMERICA'S
TEST KITCHEN

Thai Chicken Curry with Potatoes and Peanuts

From *America's Test Kitchen* Season 15: Two Ways to Unlock Asian Flavor

WHY THIS RECIPE WORKS:

Our savory-sweet *massaman* curry is a Thai dish that's spiced but not spicy. To the traditional shallots, ginger, and garlic we add dried New Mexican chiles, five-spice powder, and ground cumin as stand-ins for the traditional but hard-to-track-down spices and chiles. Broiling the chiles, shallots, and garlic yields more-robust flavors and makes the ingredients easier to process into a smooth paste. We sauté the paste to intensify the flavors before stirring in coconut milk and chicken broth. Then it was just a matter of simmering the potatoes, onion, chicken, and peanuts until they were tender. A final garnish of lime zest and cilantro add a splash of color and brightness.

Serves 4 to 6

Serve the curry with jasmine rice. The ingredients for the curry paste can be doubled to make extra for future use. Refrigerate the paste for up to one week or freeze it for up to two months.

INGREDIENTS

CURRY PASTE

- 6 dried New Mexican chiles
- 4 shallots, unpeeled
- 7 garlic cloves, unpeeled
- 1/2 cup chopped fresh ginger
- 1/4 cup water
- 4 1/2 teaspoons lime juice
- 4 1/2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon fish sauce
- 1 teaspoon five-spice powder
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

CURRY

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1 1/4 cups chicken broth
- 1 (13.5-ounce) can coconut milk
- 1 pound Yukon Gold potatoes, unpeeled, cut into 3/4-inch pieces
- 1 onion, cut into 3/4-inch pieces



3/4 teaspoon salt

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces

2 teaspoons grated lime zest

1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro

INSTRUCTIONS

1. FOR THE CURRY PASTE: Adjust oven rack to middle position and heat oven to 350 degrees. Line rimmed baking sheet with aluminum foil. Arrange chiles on prepared sheet and toast until puffed and fragrant, 4 to 6 minutes. Transfer chiles to large plate. Heat broiler.

2. Place shallots and garlic on foil-lined sheet and broil until softened and skin is charred, 6 to 9 minutes.

3. When cool enough to handle, stem and seed chiles and tear into 1 1/2-inch pieces. Process chiles in blender until finely ground, about 1 minute. Peel shallots and garlic. Add shallots, garlic, ginger, water, lime juice, oil, fish sauce, five-spice powder, cumin, and pepper to blender. Process to smooth paste, scraping down sides of blender jar as needed, 2 to 3 minutes. You should have 1 cup paste.

4. FOR THE CURRY: Heat oil in large saucepan over medium heat until shimmering. Add curry paste and cook, stirring constantly, until paste begins to brown, 2 1/2 to 3 minutes. Stir in broth, coconut milk, potatoes, onion, peanuts, and salt, scraping up any browned bits. Bring to simmer and cook until potatoes are just tender, 12 to 14 minutes.

5. Stir in chicken and continue to simmer until chicken is cooked through, 10 to 12 minutes. Remove pan from heat and stir in lime zest. Serve, passing cilantro separately.

TECHNIQUE

THAI CURRY BY COLOR AND SPICE

Several of the typical curries you'll see on a Thai menu are identifiable by their color—a reflection of the type and amount of chiles, aromatic vegetables, herbs, and spices in the curry paste. *Massaman*, a relative of yellow curry, is better known for its depth and fragrance from warm spices, which makes it stand out from other varieties.

RED

This curry, which has moderate salty sweetness, is fairly spicy and sour, thanks to lots of dried red chiles and a big hit of lime at the end.

GREEN

A high ratio of fresh green chiles plus raw aromatics and very little sugar typically makes this variation the hottest and most pungent type of Thai curry.

YELLOW

Stateside versions tend to be mild, though authentic yellow curries can be quite hot. All are heavy on turmeric—hence the color.

MASSAMAN

Though one of the mildest Thai curries, massaman is also one of the most complex. Traditionally, the paste combines





12th century—as well as dried chiles and aromatics. To cut down on ingredients, our recipe swaps some of the individual spices for five-spice powder.

TECHNIQUE

FOR COMPLEX CURRY, TURN ON THE OVEN

Massaman curry is richer-tasting and more complex than other varieties of Thai curry not just because of the mix of ingredients in its paste but also because of how they're prepared. By toasting the dried chiles and broiling the aromatic vegetables, we get a paste with a rounder and mellower flavor than we would if we added those components raw, as is done in sharper-tasting red and green curries.