



COLOMBIAN COCONUT-BRAISED CHICKEN AND COCONUT RICE

40 MINUTES

On the coast of Colombia, coconut milk is made from scratch by an arduous process of grating, mixing (with water) and pressing. The result is transformative coconut milk that lends silky texture and bright flavor to every dish it's used in. For the same results via a simpler method, we turned to the blender and shredded unsweetened coconut. After soaking the coconut in

warm water for a few minutes, we blended and strained it, yielding a light, bright, smooth-bodied milk that was as good as any we tried near Cartagena. In this recipe, we used the coconut milk to braise chicken and to steam rice. Fresh tomatoes and lime contrast with the rich, velvety texture of the chicken and rice.

Don't use cold water to puree the shredded coconut. Warm water slightly softens the shreds so they break down more easily.

INGREDIENTS

4½	CUPS UNSWEETENED SHREDDED COCONUT, DIVIDED
2	TABLESPOONS GRAPESEED OR OTHER NEUTRAL OIL
1	TEASPOON GROUND TURMERIC
1	MEDIUM YELLOW ONION, FINELY CHOPPED
8	MEDIUM GARLIC CLOVES, MINCED
1	TABLESPOON TOMATO PASTE
1½	TEASPOONS GROUND ALLSPICE
1	TABLESPOON SOY SAUCE
	KOSHER SALT
2	POUNDS BONELESS, SKINLESS CHICKEN THIGHS, TRIMMED
1½	CUPS LONG-GRAIN WHITE RICE, RINSED AND DRAINED
1	TABLESPOON LIME JUICE PLUS LIME WEDGES, TO SERVE
1	PINT CHERRY OR GRAPE TOMATOES, HALVED

DIRECTIONS

In a blender, combine 2¼ cups of the coconut and 3 cups warm water. Let stand until the coconut begins to soften, about 1 minute. Blend on high until creamy, 1 to 2 minutes. Strain through a fine-mesh strainer, pressing on the solids. Discard the solids. Repeat with the remaining coconut and another 3 cups warm water. You should have a total of 4½ cups strained coconut milk.

In a large Dutch oven over medium, heat the oil until shimmering. Stir in the turmeric and cook until fragrant and the oil has turned yellow, about 30 seconds. Add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring, until the onion is softened, about 3 minutes. Stir in the tomato paste and allspice, then 1½ cups of the coconut milk, the soy sauce and 1 teaspoon salt. Bring to a simmer, then nestle the chicken in an even layer in the liquid, cover and reduce to medium-low. Cook until a skewer inserted into the chicken meets no resistance, 18 to 22 minutes, flipping the pieces once halfway through.

While the chicken is cooking, in a medium saucepan over high, stir together the remaining 3 cups coconut milk, the rice and 2 teaspoons salt. Bring to a simmer, then cover, reduce to low and cook until the liquid is absorbed, about 15 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let stand, covered, for 5 minutes. Gently fluff the rice with a fork and fold in any coconut oil that has settled on the surface. Drape a kitchen towel over the pan, replace the lid and let stand until ready to serve.

When the chicken is done, use tongs to transfer the meat to a serving dish. Bring the liquid in the pot to a simmer over medium and cook, stirring frequently, until reduced by about half and thickened, about 12 minutes. Pour in any accumulated chicken juices and simmer for another minute. Off heat, stir in the lime juice and tomatoes. Taste and season with salt, then return the chicken to the pot, turning to coat. Transfer to the serving dish and serve with lime wedges and the rice.