

Panang Curry

By Naz Deravian

Updated May 29, 2024

Total Time 35 minutes

Prep Time 5 minutes

Cook Time 30 minutes

Rating ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ (1,344)



Christopher Testani for The New York Times

Rich with coconut milk and crushed peanuts, panang curry, also known as phanaeng or panaeng curry, is subtly spiced with coriander and cumin. This version is made with chicken, but you'll often find it made with beef and sometimes prawns. Panang curry is sometimes mistakenly linked to Penang, a Malaysian island, but it actually originated in Thailand. According to Pim Techamuanvivit, the chef and owner of Nari and Kin Khao restaurants in San Francisco, and the executive chef of Nahm Bangkok in Bangkok, it's important to use thick coconut milk for the creamiest results, and be sure to break the sauce by simmering until a layer of bright red oil shimmers on top. Purchase panang curry paste online or at an Asian market and add crushed peanuts to it if it doesn't include them (not all of them do), or prepare your own paste, as is done here.

INGREDIENTS

Yield: 4 servings

FOR THE PANANG CURRY PASTE

½ teaspoon coriander seeds

½ teaspoon cumin seeds

¼ cup/1 ounce dry-roasted,
unsalted peanuts

2 to 4 tablespoons red curry paste,
to taste (see Tip)

FOR THE CURRY

1 pound boneless, skinless chicken
breasts or thighs

2 teaspoons fish sauce, plus more
as needed

1 (13.5-ounce) can full-fat coconut
milk (do not shake)

8 makrut lime leaves, deveined, 6
torn and 2 thinly sliced, or 1

PREPARATION

Step 1

Prepare the curry paste: Heat a medium sauté pan over medium. Add the coriander and cumin. Swirl the pan around, or toss the seeds with a wooden spoon, and gently toast until fragrant, about 1 minute, taking care not to burn the spices. Transfer to a small plate and cool, then place in a spice grinder or mortar and pestle, and grind to a fine powder.

Step 2

Add the peanuts and finely grind until smooth. Transfer the mixture to a small bowl, add the red curry paste and stir until mixed.

Step 3

Thinly slice the chicken into 1½-inch-long pieces. Place in a medium bowl, drizzle with the fish sauce and mix until coated.

Step 4

Heat the same pan over medium-high. Spoon 4 tablespoons of the

teaspoon grated lime zest, for serving

Private Notes

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1 ½ teaspoons palm, granulated or brown sugar, plus more as needed

1 small, mild, thin-skinned pepper, such as a Fresno, Anaheim or banana pepper, or ½ small red bell pepper, thinly sliced

Thai basil, thinly sliced, for serving (optional, if makrut lime leaves are not used)

Rice, for serving

thick cream off the top of the coconut milk and add it to the pan; it will immediately sizzle. Stir until thickened and bubbling on the sides, about 30 seconds. Stir in the curry paste, to taste. Reduce to medium, and cook the paste, continuously stirring, until a thick paste forms and the coconut oil separates (the sauce “breaks”), 2 to 3 minutes. If it starts sticking, add a splash of coconut milk and scrape up anything from the bottom of the pan.

Step 5

Add the torn lime leaves or zest and sugar. Cook, continuously stirring, to dissolve the sugar and infuse the flavors, about 2 minutes. Add the remaining coconut milk, increase to medium-high, bring to a boil and cook, continuously stirring, until the curry has thickened enough to coat the back of a spoon and has a layer of bright red oil on top, 4 to 8 minutes. The curry should be at a lively simmer; adjust the heat as necessary.

Step 6

Add the chicken and cook, stirring frequently, until cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes. If using, stir in the peppers, saving a few for serving, and cook until just incorporated, about 1 minute. Taste and add more fish sauce and sugar, if needed. (Be mindful, this is not a sweet curry; the sweetness should hit a back note, not lead with it.)

Step 7

Garnish with the sliced lime leaves or Thai basil and reserved peppers. Serve alongside rice.

TIP

Different brands of curry paste vary in spice levels. Taste a little first and determine how much to use.