

Allegra McEvedy's Green Curry for People & Planet's Go Green Week Green Curry Night

For 4 robust appetites

Ingredients

300g Jasmine rice

For the paste

2 tsp coriander seeds

1 tsp cumin seeds

3 shallots, peeled & quartered

5 cloves of garlic, peeled

200g bunch of coriander

3 spring onions, manky outer leaves trimmed & sliced into inch long batons, keeping as much green as possible.

6 lime leaves

1-3 bird's eye green chillis – totally up to you how hot you like it

2 sticks of lemongrass, thin sliced

1 fat thumb of galangal, scrubbed with knobbly bits taken off, roughly chopped (you could substitute with ginger)

optional additions to paste – authentic but not very veggie

½ dried shrimp paste, melted in 1 tablespoon of hot water

a few good shakes of fish sauce

For the curry

4 tablespoons peanut or rapeseed oil

2 free-range chicken breasts, each sliced into about 8 pieces - *optional*

Whatever veg you have got around (add extra if you aren't adding chicken) but we are using...

A big handful button mushrooms, well washed

1 yellow pepper, deseeded and cut into chunks

1 courgette, sliced 1cm thick

1 head of broccoli, cut into florets then trim the stalk and thin slice it

half a tin water chestnuts, each sliced into 3 disks

1 x 400ml tin of coconut milk

2 heads of bok choy, sliced into quarters through the root

Salt

Handful of Thai or Holy basil, rough chopped (you can substitute a mix half half of tarragon & basil, alternatively use corriander).

a big handful of beansprouts

a big handful of sugar snaps, sliced lengthways

1 lime, in quarters to serve with

Instructions

Weigh the rice into a bowl, noting the level the rice comes up to, then tip the rice into

a shallow saucepan; pour in twice the volume of water as rice. Put this on high heat, with a lid on, until it simmers then turn it down to the lowest heat, keeping it covered all the time.

For the paste

Put the coriander seeds and cumin seeds into a dry frying pan on a medium heat for about 5 minutes to toast them, giving them the odd shake. Once you can smell their wonderful scents take them off the heat.

Take your bunch of coriander: the stalks for the paste and the leaves for finishing the dish. Tear/cut the stalks off just below the leaves, trim and discard the earthy root tips, then rough chop the stalks and give them a good wash.

Put these into your food processor with the toasted seeds, spring onions, lime leaves, green chillis, lemongrass & galangal. The dried shrimp paste and fish sauce do make the authentic flavour, but veggies can opt for a shot of soy instead. Blitz to a paste.

For the curry

Get your best heavy based pan onto medium heat, and warm the peanut or rapeseed oil in it. Scrape in all the paste, and let it sizzle gently in the oil for a few minutes, but don't let it brown.

Meanwhile get all the veggies ready and have a quick look at your rice, which should have produced nice steam tunnels, but still have some water in the bottom. Resist the urge to stir, and just let it finish doing its thing.

Now turn the heat up to max on your paste and add the broccoli, courgette slices, pepper, water chestnuts, mushrooms and chicken if you fancy it, giving them all a good roll and coat.

Once you've done a thorough stirring job, have a good seasoning moment - a healthy amount of salt, and some pepper...fresh from a grinder is just much better.

Pour in the coconut milk then fill the tin two thirds full of water and pour this in too.

Lay your quartered heads of bok choy on top of the curry (ie don't stir them in) and put a lid on.

Hot food always tastes better in warm plates, so you might want to think about that round now.

The next bit is up to you – all depends how crunchy (and good for you) you like your veg: if you like it good and crisp, turn the heat off after around 4 minutes... as soon as the bok choy has wilted. If you want them a bit softer, however, continue cooking for up to 5 mins...after that a certain something of the freshness is lost.

Hopefully somewhere around about now your rice should be cooked & fluffy, and you can serve this either with the curry or on the side, but you don't need me to tell you that.

Put a handful of beansprouts and some slices of sugarsnaps into each bowl, then ladle on the curry.

Last bit - sprinkle with chopped Thai basil and corry, and I like to give it the extra freshness of a last squeeze of lime.

" I'm delighted to have come up with this recipe for People and Planet, a group who work tirelessly to improve many areas of the world we've inherited. Their attitude is admirable, their actions and support they give students vital and I have a particular fondnes for their banner-making - one of which was created in our house! If I hadn't been so naughty at school and made it to being a student I'm sure I would have been an active P & P participant, as I share many of their values.

I have particular connection with their support of the Fairtrade Foundation, for whom I am a spokesperson, and the idea that my simple Green Curry recipe can help fundraising makes me very happy. You'll need good, fresh veggies - a visit to your local Thai shop will inspire you with their aromatic ingredients (the shrimp paste is one of the pongiest things ever, but to the people of South East Asia it plays a vital part in the final balance of flavours).

One of the things we're all supposed to be doing is eating less meat, and this curry definately does not need the chicken, but equally, having been a chef for 18 years now, I now some folk (mostly men!) are put off if there's no meat in sight, and I wanted this recipe to appeal to all. It's a particularly fresh version of the classic we all know and love. Thank-you P & P for asking me to play!"

Allegra McEvedy MBE