Fragrant Thai green curry

Serves 4

Delicious and fragrant Thai green curry. Impress your friends and family with this brilliant recipe.

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Fragrant Thai green curry

Ingredients

4 chicken breasts without bone & skin, each cut into five large pieces (or substiute for vegetables of your choice)
2 x 400ml tins of coconut milk
1 handful of pistachio nuts

Ingredients: Green curry paste

6 spring onions, washed & trimmed
4 - 6 medium green chillies, deseeded & finely chopped
2 cloves of garlic
1 tablespoon fresh root ginger, peeled & finely chopped
1 tablespoon coriander seeds, pounded or crushed
½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
Maldon sea salt & freshly ground pepper to taste
Half a handful of lime leaves, torn
1 teaspoon soy sauce
3 drops of fish sauce
2 lemon grass stalks, trimmed back & finely chopped
2 good handfuls of fresh basil on the stalk
3 food handfuls of fresh coriander on the stalk
3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Zest & juice of 3 - 4 limes, to taste

Method

Put all the green curry paste ingredients in a pestle and mortar or food processor and mash/whizz to a smooth green paste. Marinate the chicken or vegetables in a little of the paste for 30 minutes, then add a little oil and the chicken pieces to a hot casserole-type pan or wok. Fry for 4 minutes, then add the remainder of the marinade – it will sizzle and spit. Stir in the coconut milk, bring to the boil and simmer gently for 8 minutes until the chicken is cooked. NOTE – please check your chicken by removing a small piece and cutting it in half to check it is cooked through. Season to taste. The flavour should have a kick but be reasonably mellow – very fresh and fragrant.

Put some rice into the base of your bowl, add in the chicken curry – ensure you add in the liquid. Top with chopped pistachio nuts, toasted coconut flakes and fresh coriander.

Sprinkle with poppadoms for an added crunch.

Important: food hygiene

Food hygiene is important in all kitchens especially when preparing and working with raw chicken. Please ensure you wash your hands well before and after preparing raw chicken. Also your benches, boards and all utensils used to prepare the chicken.

Ingredients: Chunky coconut, tomato, cucumber & lime relish

16 cherry tomatoes, quartered or roughly chopped
½ fresh coconut, grated or shaved
1 small handful of basil or coriander, roughly chopped
15cm/6 inches of cucumber, skinned, seeds removed & roughly chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil
Salt & freshly ground black pepper
Juice of 1 - 2 limes
1 thinly sliced red chilli (optional)

Method

This is a really nice fresh salad/relish and is very simple to make. It goes especially well with Fragrant Green Chicken Curry.

Put the tomatoes, coconut, basil, cucumber and chilli (if using) into a bowl and toss. Just before serving, toss in the olive oil, salt, pepper and lime juice to taste.

Rice

Rice has been an important part of people's everyday diet for centuries and it's still one of the most important foods in many different cultures. There are loads of varieties of rice available in our stores now, but in this chapter basmati is the king. I'm going to give you my basic recipe for getting perfect rice every time, as well as a few of my favourite ways to flavour it. Having said that, I want to point out that the natural nuttiness and flavour of plain rice is not to be underestimated. Have a go at mastering simple plain rice first – you'll be amazed at the light and fluffy results.

Once you've got the hang of that, you can give the other recipes a go. It's worth remembering that any flavouring you boil with the rice will infuse it with wonderful fragrances and flavours. So try boiling things like fresh herbs, a cinnamon stick, a few cardamom pods, a strip of lemon zest or even a green tea bag in the water with the rice. Just double the recipe for 8 to 12 people.

Perfect, basic rice

Ingredients

Sea salt
350g basmati rice

Method

Put a large pan of salted water on a high heat and bring to the boil • Rinse the rice in a colander under running water for about 1 minute, or until the water runs clear (this will stop the grains sticking together later) • Add your rice to the boiling water and wait for the grains to start dancing around • From that point, boil for 5 minutes • Drain the rice in a colander • Pour 2.5cm of water into the pan, put it back on the heat and bring it to the boil again, then turn down to a simmer • Cover the rice in the colander with foil or a lid • Place the colander on top of the pan of simmering water and let the rice steam over it for 8 to 10 minutes • Remove from the heat and if you're ready, serve immediately • If not, leave the foil or lid on and put aside until ready to serve – it should stay warm for about 20 minutes.

garlic & nutmeg rice

Ingredients

8 cloves of garlic
¼ of a nutmeg
Olive oil
A knob of butter
Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper
1 level teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 small lemon

Method

Cook your rice • Peel and finely chop the garlic • Grate the nutmeg • Put a large frying pan on a low heat and add a lug of olive oil and the butter • When the butter melts add the garlic and season with salt and pepper • Cook until the garlic starts to colour • Stir in
the nutmeg and cinnamon • Add your cooked rice and stir thoroughly until well coated • Remove from the heat, squeeze over the lemon juice, stir well, then serve.

Coriander & lime rice

Ingredients

2 limes
Extra virgin olive oil
Large bunch of fresh coriander
Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper

Method

Cook your rice • Pick the coriander leaves off the stalks and finely chop • Zest your limes and cut them in half • Mix the coriander and lime zest into your rice, then squeeze over the lime juice • Drizzle over a good lug of extra virgin olive oil and season with salt and pepper • Stir well and serve

Lemon, ginger & turmeric rice

Ingredients

1 lemon
Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper
2.5cm piece of fresh root ginger
1 heaped teaspoon turmeric
A knob of butter
Olive oil

Method

Cook your rice • Zest your lemon, then cut it in half • Peel and grate the ginger • Put a large frying pan on a low heat and add a lug of olive oil and the butter • When it starts to bubble gently, add the lemon zest, ginger and turmeric and squeeze over the lemon juice • Season with salt and pepper • Stir until you have a golden paste • Spoon your cooked rice into the frying pan • Stir thoroughly and serve

Spicy chilli rice

Ingredients

4 cardamon pods
1 - 2 fresh red chillies, to your taste
2 knobs of butter
1 tablespoon tomatoe puree
Sea salt & freshly ground black pepper
1 small lemon
Olive oil
4 cloves

Method

Cook your rice • Crack open the cardamom pods in your hands, then keep the seeds and discard the pods • Finely chop your chillies • Put a large frying pan on a low heat and add a lug of olive oil and the butter • When it starts to bubble add the cardamom seeds, chillies, cloves and tomato purée and season with salt and pepper • Stir and cook for 2 minutes • Spoon your cooked rice into the frying pan • Stir thoroughly until well coated • Remove from the heat, squeeze over the lemon juice, stir well and serve.