

Massaman Curry with Beef

Serving 4

INGREDIENTS:

For the massaman curry paste (tbs: tablespoon, ts: teaspoon):

1 tbs whole coriander seeds, or ground coriander
1 ts whole cumin seeds, or ground cumin
4 to 5 green cardamoms pods, or 1/2 ts ground cardamom
4 to 5 whole cloves or 1/4 ts ground cloves
1 whole star anise
1-inch piece cinnamon, or 1/4 ts ground cinnamon
1/2 ts whole white peppercorns, or ground pepper
1/4 ts grated nutmeg
1/4 ts salt
5 to 6 dried hot red Thai chilies, soaked in warm water for about 15 minutes and drained
2 lemongrass stalks
4 to 5 kaffir lime leaves, backbone removed and finely shredded
2,5 cm. piece galangal, peeled and finely chopped
2 medium shallots, chopped
60 ml chopped coriander stalks (or roots, if you can find them)
6 garlic cloves, chopped
1/2 tbs shrimp paste

For the curry:

500 gr. beef chuck roast, cut into large bite-sized chunks
250 ml chicken or beef stock
// for vegetarian: 1 head of cauliflower, 1 large onion //

250 ml coconut milk
1 tbs coconut or neutral oil
4 tbss massaman curry paste (recipe above or your favourite brand)
125 ml coconut milk
2 large potatoes, cut into bite-sized chunks
1/4 ts tamarind paste (or 1 tbs tamarind water), plus more to taste
Sugar, to taste
Fish sauce, to taste
dry-roasted peanuts (optional)

PREPARATIONS:

Make the curry paste:

Dry-roast the coriander, cumin, cardamom, cloves, star anise, cinnamon, and peppercorns, one at a time, in a skillet over medium-high heat for about 30 seconds each or until each spice is fragrant. Transfer to a mortar and pestle, add the grated nutmeg with a little salt and grind until all ingredients turn into a powder.

Add the rest of the paste ingredients to the mortar and pestle with a little more salt, adding each ingredient one by one, until they form a fine paste. Alternatively, use a blender to make the curry paste, blending in bursts until a paste is formed.

Transfer the paste to a covered container until ready to use. It will keep in the fridge for a few weeks.

Make the curry:

Heat the oil over medium-high heat and add 4 tablespoons of massaman curry paste. Sauté the paste for a couple of minutes, until fragrant.

Add the coconut milk and bring it up to a gentle simmer, then add the beef chunks (or vegetables) and potatoes. Season the curry with the tamarind, a few splashes of fish sauce, and some palm sugar. Bring back to a low simmer, then reduce heat to medium-low and cover. Cook for approx. 45 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender and the meat is soft.

Taste and adjust seasonings if you wish. Stir in the peanuts and serve with steamed or coconut rice.