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2017



THAI AT HOME with

DAVID THOMPSON

LONG CHIM

Chicken stir-fried with red curry and holy basil

Chop the bird into pieces – on the bone is even better,” says Long Chim and Nahm chef David Thompson. “Legs and wings are the best cuts to use. Fry and brown the chicken well before adding the paste – it will give the dish a more rounded flavour and an attractive colour. The red curry paste is the only curry paste I would cook in a wok. I like to sneak a little pork fat into the mix for a richer curry.”

Prep time 1 hr, cook 25 mins
Serves 4-6

- 60 ml (¼ cup) melted lard, chicken fat or vegetable oil
- 2-3 chicken Marylands (about 600gm-800gm), cut through the bone into 3cm-4cm pieces
- 45 ml fish sauce, or to taste
- Pinch of chilli powder
- Pinch of ground dry-roasted coriander seeds (see note)
- 1 tsp crushed light palm sugar
- 1 long red or green chilli, halved lengthways
- Green peppercorn sprigs, picked (optional; see note), to serve
- Chopped Thai scud chillies, thinly sliced garlic, and fish sauce, to serve
- Steamed rice, to serve

Garlic and chilli paste

- 4 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 5 gm piece grachai (see note), coarsely chopped, plus extra, thinly sliced to serve
- 3 Thai scud chillies (see note)
- Pinch of holy basil buds, plus holy basil leaves to serve (see note)
- ½ kaffir lime leaf, finely chopped, plus extra leaves torn for stir-fry

Red curry paste

- 25 gm (about 15) dried long red chillies, halved, seeds removed, soaked in hot water for 30-40 minutes
- 2 tbsp sliced lemongrass (white part only)
- 2 tsp coarsely chopped peeled galangal
- ½ tsp finely grated kaffir lime rind
- 1-2 red shallots, coarsely chopped
- 2-3 Thai garlic cloves, crushed (see note)
- ½ tsp gapi (see note)
- Large pinch of ground dry-roasted coriander seeds (see note)
- Pinch of ground dry-roasted cumin seeds, (see note)
- Pinch of ground white pepper

1 For garlic and chilli paste, pound ingredients and a pinch of salt with a mortar and pestle.

2 For red curry paste, drain chillies and coarsely chop, then pound to fine paste along with a pinch of salt with a mortar and pestle. Add remaining ingredients one at a time, pounding to a paste between additions.

3 Heat fat or oil in a wok over medium-high heat, add chicken and stir-fry until coloured and fragrant (5-7 minutes). Add garlic and chilli paste and fry until golden (1-2 minutes). Season with ½ tbsp fish sauce and simmer for a few moments while turning and coating the chicken. Add 60gm red curry paste (remaining will keep refrigerated in an airtight container for a week) and simmer over low heat until reduced (1-2 minutes). Add extra torn kaffir lime leaves, chilli powder and ground coriander, then season to taste with palm sugar and remaining fish sauce. Add 250ml water and simmer, adding more water as necessary, until chicken is cooked, and curry sauce is thick, dry, and tastes rich and spicy, with quite a lot of oil on the surface (15-20 minutes).

4 To finish, check the seasoning and adjust with extra fish sauce, if needed. Add the long red or green chilli, scatter with green peppercorns, extra grachai and holy basil leaves. Combine chopped scud chillies, sliced garlic and fish sauce to taste, and serve alongside stir-fried chicken with steamed rice.

Note To dry-roast whole spices, stir continuously in a dry frying pan over medium-high heat until fragrant (the cooking time varies depending on the spices used), then grind in a spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle. Green peppercorn sprigs, gapi (Thai shrimp paste), grachai (Thai wild ginger), scud chillies and holy basil are all available from Thai grocers. Thai garlic is smaller and sweeter than other varieties of garlic, and is available from Thai grocers. If it's unavailable, substitute small garlic cloves.

MY NOTES



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LONG CHIM

Prawns baked with vermicelli

"This dish is found mostly in Chinatown in Bangkok, but it deserves to be eaten everywhere," says Long Chim and Nahm chef David Thompson. "The noodles are dry and that's why they really do benefit from a good marinade. Toss and turn the noodles often to ensure an even distribution of the sauce. I love it when the noodles are overcooked and almost burnt on the edges. Take them that far when you cook them and you'll see what I mean."

This recipe can be started a day ahead to marinate the noodles.

Prep time 30 mins, cook 20
(plus soaking) Serves 4-6

- 2 tbsp melted lard or white sesame oil (see note)
- 240 gm (about 6) large prawns, heads and tails intact, whiskers and legs trimmed
- Coriander leaves (about 2 tbsp), to serve

Marinated noodles

- 180 gm glass noodles (mung bean noodles)
- 4 spring onions, trimmed and cut into 4cm lengths
- 4 garlic cloves, bruised
- 15 gm unpeeled ginger, thinly sliced
- 2 small coriander roots with some stalk
- 120 ml oyster sauce
- 60 ml (¼ cup) lard, melted
- 60 ml (¼ cup) dark Chinese wine (see note)
- 1½ tbsp roasted sesame oil
- ¾ tsp white sugar
- Two pinches of coarsely ground white peppercorns
- Two pinches of coarsely ground black peppercorns
- Two pinches of coarsely ground dry-roasted coriander seeds (see note)
- Large pinch of ground dry-roasted Sichuan peppercorns (see note)
- Large pinch of Chinese five-spice
- Large pinch of ground star anise
- Large pinch of ground ginger
- Large pinch of ground galangal (see note)

1 For marinated noodles, soak noodles in a bowl of cold water until just softened (about 1 hour). Drain well, then cut with scissors into manageable lengths (about 10cm or so), and set aside in a colander. Lightly bruise spring onions, garlic, ginger and coriander root, then combine in a bowl with remaining ingredients and noodles. Turn to coat and combine well, then refrigerate to marinate (at least 6 hours or overnight).

2 Preheat oven to 250C. Warm a 1.5-litre Chinese claypot or flameproof casserole (see note) for a few minutes over medium-high heat. Meanwhile, turn the noodles with your hands to remix with the marinade. Heat lard or oil in claypot, then add a piece or two of ginger and some spring onions from the marinade and stir until coloured (30 seconds). Add half the noodle mixture, followed by prawns, then add remaining noodles, stir, then cook without stirring, until sizzling and coloured (2-3 minutes). Cover with a lid and bake in oven, without lifting the lid, until prawns are pink and cooked (12-15 minutes).

3 Turn and stir the noodles; don't worry if they have stuck to the pot - these crunchy, charred bits are the best part. The finished dish should be quite dry and the prawns should be cooked through and tempting. Serve sprinkled with coriander.

Note White sesame oil is available in health-food shops. To devein a prawn (remove the digestive tract), bend the head downwards and ease it out through the gap between the head and body with a wooden skewer. Dark Chinese wine is available from Chinese grocers; if it's unavailable use Shaoxing wine. To dry-roast whole spices, stir continuously in a dry frying pan over medium-high heat until fragrant (the cooking time varies depending on the spices used), then grind in a spice grinder or with a mortar and pestle. Ground galangal is available from select Asian supermarkets. If you use a casserole, the cooking time may vary.

MY NOTES