Massaman Curry Recipe

Massaman curry is a rich, mildly spicy Thai curry with a unique fusion of flavors, combining ingredients from Persia, the Indian Subcontinent, and the Malay Archipelago with traditional Thai ingredients.

It features a complex blend of spices such as cardamom, cinnamon, cloves, star anise, cumin, bay leaves, nutmeg, and mace, balanced with local elements like lemongrass, galangal, shrimp paste, and chili peppers. The curry is typically made with coconut milk and cream as a base, and commonly includes chicken, beef, potatoes, onions, and peanuts.

Its name is a corruption of the Persian word mosalman, meaning “Muslim,” reflecting its origins in Thai Muslim communities and its historical ties to trade routes and cultural exchange. The dish is often served with rice and has been celebrated globally, including being ranked the #1 most delicious food in CNN’s 2011 and 2018 lists of the World’s 50 Most Delicious Foods.

Massaman Curry History and Culture brings a rich and varied culture complimenting the varied and exotic ingredients.

This recipe based on the recipe[1)] by Sylvia, Feasting at Home

Ingredients

Proteins

- **Chicken breast** is the classic standard. Substitutions include chicken thighs (see notes), shrimp, crispy tofu, or a mixture of veggies.

Oils

- **Coconut oil**: Used to bloom the curry paste with the spices. Adds a nutty, subtly sweet taste. Actually, any oil can be used as the temperature is not raised to the *smoke point*. We use olive oil and cannot tell the difference.

Aromatics / mire poix

Aromatics like onions and garlic are not featured in Thai cuisine and are omitted in this recipe.

Liquids & Flavoring

- **Thai red curry paste**: For ease we use ***Lobo brand*** Thai red curry paste[2)] and then enhance the paste with Massaman spices. You can use absolutely use Massaman curry paste, but it is harder to find and usually more expensive. When enhanced with spices, red curry paste is a great base for Massaman curry.

- **Massaman Spices**: Coriander seeds and cumin seeds (toasting these seeds infuses the curry paste with their nutty, fragrant aromas) along with cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, and nutmeg - warm and comforting spices that bring the dish to life.
- **Full fat coconut milk**: Gives the curry a creamy texture and rich flavor.
- **Light brown sugar**: Adds a hint of sweetness to balance all of the savory, aromatic flavors.
- **Tamarind puree or paste**: Balances the sweetness of the dish with a hint of sour flavor.
- **Peanut butter** (optional): If used, adds an even richer, nutty flavor to the curry.
- **Red Miso Paste**[3)]: adds another dimension of umami flavor and complexity

Vegetables

- **Eggplant** always can be integrated into a Thai curry, especially a curry like Massaman Curry with rich spices and flavor.
- **Potatoes**: thin-skinned potatoes like Yukon gold or red potatoes are classic to a Massaman Curry. Most times, we substitute eggplant but either potatoes or eggplant can be used.

Garnish

- **Roasted Dry Peanuts**
- **Fresh Baby Spinach** leaves as a small side of freshness in the bowl.

Accompaniments

- see Massaman Curry Thai Menu
- **starters**
  - fresh spring rolls
  - Samossas
  - Dipping Sauce
- Rice
  - Basmati Rice
- Asian Cucumber Salad
- Som Tom - Green Papaya Salad

Equipment

- Instant Pot or (electric) pressure cooker or Dutch oven
- Measuring spoons and cups: for measuring ingredients –> huh? who measures?
- Cutting board: for chopping
- Chef's knife: for chopping ingredients
- Stirring utensil: like a wooden spoon
- Ladle for serving
- Bowls and spoons

Instructions

1. Establish a mise_en_place make sure that all of the equipment and ingredients are prepared and you have thoroughly read the recipe

1. Measure the spices, keeping the seeds separate from the ground spices.
2. Toss the chicken slices with about 1/2 teaspoon salt.

2. Parboil the potatoes. Add potatoes to a large pot and cover with cold water. Boil, then simmer 5-7 minutes before draining.

3. Bloom the curry paste. Add coconut oil to a medium pot and bring the heat to medium. Sauté coriander and cumin seeds 2 minutes while stirring, then add shallots and ginger, stirring a minute more. Add cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, and nutmeg, and then the curry. 4. Add coconut milk and potatoes. Mix everything together, simmer 10 minutes.

5. Add remaining ingredients. Add fish sauce, sugar, and tamarind paste. Whisk in the peanut butter. Add sliced chicken breast.

6. Simmer. Simmer for 5 minutes, until chicken is opaque. Serve immediately over jasmine rice with desired garnishes.

Serving Suggestions

see Mussaman Curry Dinner for a complete dinner serving in the Thai style.

Notes, Tips, Variations

Variation

- Use chicken thighs: If using chicken thighs instead, add them in step 4 with the potatoes.

Make a seafood curry: Instead of chicken, shrimp makes a nice protein in this Thai curry. You could also sub any type of white fish. Use tofu: For a vegan or vegetarian option, simply use our Baked tofu or crispy tofu instead of the chicken. Try a vegetable curry: Or skip the protein and add hearty vegetables like cauliflower, winter squash, zucchini, carrots, baby corn, or peas. Make vegan massaman curry: Use tofu or veggies instead of the chicken, and use a vegan fish sauce or lite soy sauce instead of the fish sauce.

Storing

- Refrigerator Store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 3 days. Reheat on the stovetop until warm or reheat in the microwave.
- Freezer To freeze, store in a freezer bag for up to 3 months.

See Also

- Massaman Thai Curry Menu
- Massaman Curry History & Culture

[1)] Massaman Curry by Feasting at Home
[2)] Lobo brand Red Thai Curry Paste <Amazon.fr>
[3)] Red Miso Paste <Amazon.fr>

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