

Four tips for an outstanding Thai green curry chicken at home and full recipe



Tip #1 - Make your own fresh curry paste if you can find the ingredients

It is so much better than the store-bought version. Unlike the red curry, which the redness comes from the dried chili, the green curry's greenness comes from the fresh chili. Now imagine fresh chili in a can and you can appreciate why the freshly made paste would be better.

Now, if you can't find all the ingredients, you can substitute some of them. But there are something you can't substitute, in which case, the store-bought paste will be your only choice.

Tip #2 - Use a whole chicken

Chop it up and use bone-in chicken. The curry is basically the paste + coconut milk + stock. The bone-in chicken will add so much flavor, and the result will be amazing. If this is too much of a trouble, you can use chicken meat but please use the best chicken stock you can find.

Tip #3 - Keep the basil until the last minute before serving

Basil wilts and darkens badly under the heat. Turn off the stove and add the basil at the last minute to keep it green and palatable.

Tip #4 - No, it is not that green.

The final product won't be bright green, especially after the green ingredients like cilantro are already cooked. Also, this curry is great as a left over, so make sure you make a big batch. It can be kept in a freezer for a month. Reheating it for a quick lunch is very easy and fast.



Use the whole chicken and chop it up!



Green curry paste recipe

Green Curry Paste

If you have cooked with someone in Thailand at home, you will find that we don't usually weight / measure ingredients. We just eyeball it. Green curry paste is one of the things that you can't mess it up with inappropriate proportion as long as you keep them reasonable. Last night however I measured everything before I put in the blender and record them so this will be a good starting point. The result was nothing short of excellent. Feel free to tweak it however you like to make it fit your preference. You can add or reduce the chili to adjust the spiciness. I like to keep the same proportion between Galanga and lemongrass, and among cilantro root, garlic and shallot.

Green Curry Paste Recipe

- 3/4 cups (1.5 oz) Galanga
- 3/4 cups (1.5 oz) lemongrass
- 1 tsp kaffir-lime zest (if not available, substitute 6 kaffir-lime leaves)
- 1 oz cilantro root (if not available, substitute cilantro stem)
- 1 oz (about one head) garlic
- 1/2 tsp whole white peppercorn
- 5 (0.3 oz) Thai bird-eye chili (omit for less spicy)
- 8 (4 oz) Serrano pepper (use less for less spicy)
- 1.5 tsp coriander seed
- 1/4 tsp cumin
- 1 tbps (about 1 oz) shrimp paste
- 1 oz (about three small) shallot
- 1 tbsp kosher salt
- Coconut oil or coconut milk as needed to get the blender to blend



Can't find the cilantro root?
Use the stem instead.



Coriander seed, cumin and white peppercorn



Lemongrass - sliced them up



Galanga root, please don't substitute ginger.

You should be able to find the galanga, lemongrass and shrimp paste at your local Asian supermarket. 99 Ranch market has all these things, or you can go to the Vietnamese market on Beach and Magnolia if you are in the Surf City. You can't substitute these ingredients. If you can't find them, the store-bought in the can will be a better option.

One thing that will definitely excel your curry if you can find it: Kaffir-lime zest. I have never seen this in the supermarket in the United State.

It's hard to find even in Thai market in Thai Town, Los Angeles. We occasionally receive it as a gift from our friends who grow this tree in the backyard. It looks like this ...



Another ingredient that is not usually available is the cilantro root. Don't sweat if you can't find the root. Just use the stem (not the leave). One of these days I will have to grow my own cilantro just for the root, which is a lot more earthy and pungent than the stem.

Making the curry paste

Toast the spice until it's brown and smell nice.

Get all the ingredients ready and put them all in the blender. I had to add a little coconut milk to get it going. Coconut milk in a can will separate into the thicker and thinner part. It is important that you do not shake the can. I use the thinner part of the milk here and reserve the thicker part for later.

You can alternatively use the granite mortar and pestle. Pound and pound and pound like there is no tomorrow. I used to help my mom do that when I was young. It was fun until some of the chili seed got into my eyes. Some people say mortar and pestle will get a better result than the blender. I find the outcomes not significantly different except the blender is much easier on my muscle and my eyes.



Shrimp paste - i got this from Thailand.
You can buy yours at local Asian grocery.



Put everything in the blender. I use Vitamix here. You can use any blender but may need to add more liquid for regular blender.



Don't forget to toast the spice first



The final product

Now we are ready to make the green curry chicken. Here's the ingredients.

Chicken Green Curry Recipe

Yield: 6 servings

green curry paste - all that was made earlier

- 1 whole chicken, chopped into pieces - keep the bone.
- 1 can (19 oz) coconut milk (I use Mae Ploy brand)
- 3 cups chicken stock
- 1 can of bamboo shoot, drained
- Around 4-5 fresh serrano pepper, sliced
- Around 2-3 fresh red jalapeno, sliced
- 1/4 cups fingerroot ginger (Kra-chai)
- Fish sauce, to taste
- Palm sugar, to taste
- About 1 cup thai basil (Italian basil is fine)

I got this whole chicken from Amazon Fresh. A 3.5-lbs whole chicken is a perfect size for my family.



A 3.5 lbs whole chicken from Amazon



chop, chop, chop

Chop it up. Keep the bone, of course. We will use them all.

In a large pot, stir the thicker part of the coconut milk on a medium heat until bubble.

Add in the green curry and keep stirring until the curry is fragrant. Since I was in front of the stove all the time, I couldn't tell the smell until my wife and my mother-in-law came down from upstairs and said the curry smells so good.

Add the chicken. Season a little bit with fish sauce. We are not looking to brown the chicken here, but we want the chicken to absorb some of the green curry flavor.

Add the rest of the coconut milk and the chicken stock. Cook over low/medium heat until the chicken is tender and the stock is flavorful. I cooked mine for about 40 minutes. Do not let the curry rolling-boil at any point. We just want the curry to bubble here and there. I call it the curry is 'winking' at you during this process. Then, add the bamboo shoot.



Start with the thicker part of the coconut milk



Then add the curry paste and cook until fragrant



Add the chicken and simmer



Kra-chai (finger root ginger) will give a unique flavor to this dish

Add Kra-chai. Some people add this only when making green curry with fish ball to tame the fishiness. I like to add this whenever I make a green curry. And, please do not substitute it with ginger. They are totally not the same. If you can't find it, just skip it.

Add the fresh serrano pepper and red jalapeno. These are not really for the heat, but more for the color.



Add the serrano and jalapeno pepper



Turn off the heat and add the basil at the last minute

Finally, season with salt, fish sauce and palm sugar to taste. Turn off the heat. Add the fresh basil and we are done.

Serve over steam rice or rice vermicelli. I like to eat my green curry with a hard-boiled egg.

I hope you get to try this recipe and enjoy it. Green curry is great as a left over so you can cook a lot of them and keep them in the fridge. It's one of the dish that the flavor develops even more after the longer you keep and reheat. Enjoy!

