

COOKING AT REN

April 4, 2012

Crispy Thai Shrimp Cakes With Asian Mango Salad

1 lb medium shrimp, shells
and tail removed
1/4 lb long beans or green
beans, thinly sliced
1/4 cup unsweetened coconut
milk
2 Tbl cilantro
1 lemongrass stalk, tender
white inner bulb minced
1 red Thai chile chopped
1 Tbl Asian fish sauce
1 tea salt
2 Tbl vegetable oil

In a saucepan of boiling
water, cook the beans until
bright green, about 2 mins.
Drain and pat dry with towel

In food processor, combine the
shrimp with the coconut milk,
cilantro, lemongrass, chile, fish
sauce and salt. Pulse to a
chunky consistency. Scrape
the mixture into a bowl and
stir in the green beans. Form
into sixteen 1/4 cup patties

In a large nonstick skillet, heat
the oil. Add the shrimp cakes
and cook over moderately
high heat until browned on
the bottom, about 2 mins.
Flip and cook over moderate
heat until the cakes are
browned on the other side and
just cooked through about 3
mins.

Mango Salad

1 Mango, peeled and small
dice
1 small shallot, peeled and
small dice
1 Asian pear peeled and small
dice
3 Tbl cilantro minced
juice from 1 lime

Combine all the ingredients in
a bowl and toss. Add salt if
needed

Thai Cucumber Salad

1/4 cup fresh lime juice
1 1/2 tablespoons fish sauce
1 1/2 tablespoons sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons minced
seeded jalapeño chili (about 1
large)
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 1/2 seedless cucumbers
3/4 cup sliced red onion
3 tablespoons chopped fresh
mint
3 tablespoons coarsely chopped
lightly salted roasted peanuts

Whisk first 5 ingredients in
medium bowl.

Place cucumbers, onion, and
mint in large bowl. Add
dressing and toss to coat.

Season salad to taste with salt
and pepper. Sprinkle with
peanuts and serve.

Plum Sauce

1 cup plum preserves or plum jam
 2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
 1 tablespoon minced shallots
 1 teaspoon honey
 1 teaspoon minced fresh ginger
 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic
 1/2 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

In a small saucepan, bring all the ingredients to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring, until the preserves are melted, about 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and adjust the seasoning to taste. Let cool to room temperature before serving.

Umeboshi Plum Sauce

2 1/2 cups rice wine vinegar
 1 1/4 cups sugar
 10 Japanese pickled plums (umeboshi), drained, seeded, and chopped
 2 tablespoons minced seeded jalapeno peppers

In a medium saucepan, bring the rice wine vinegar to a simmer. Whisk in the sugar and add the plums and jalapenos. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, 30 to 35 minutes. Set aside to cool.

Thai Chile Sauce

1/4 cup rice wine vinegar
 1/4 cup brown sugar
 2 or 3 tiny Thai chiles, red or green, thinly sliced
 2 tablespoons chopped or crushed roasted unsalted peanuts
 2 teaspoons fish sauce
 1 teaspoon grated ginger

To make the dipping sauce, combine all ingredients in a small bowl.

Thai Red-Curry Squash Soup

4 tablespoons unsalted butter
 1 large onion, thinly sliced
 1/4 cup thinly sliced fresh ginger, plus 1 cup slivered fresh ginger
 2 tablespoons Thai red curry paste
 3 pounds kabocha, kuri or buttercup squash—peeled, seeded and cut into 2-inch pieces
 5 cups water
 Two 13 1/2-ounce cans unsweetened coconut milk
 2 lime leaves or 1 teaspoon lime zest
 1 large stalk of fresh lemongrass, smashed and cut into 2-inch lengths
 2 tablespoons sugar
 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
 Salt
 1/4 cup vegetable oil
 2 large scallions, thinly sliced

In a large, melt the butter. Add the onion and sliced ginger and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion is softened, 7 minutes.

Add the curry paste and cook, stirring, about 2 minutes. Add the squash and water and bring to a boil. Cover partially and simmer over low heat until soft, 25 minutes. Add the coconut milk, lime leaves and lemongrass, cover partially and simmer for 30 minutes longer. Discard the lime leaves and lemongrass.

Working in batches, puree the soup in a blender; add back to pot. Stir in the sugar and lime juice and season with salt.

In a small skillet, heat the oil until shimmering. Add the slivered ginger and cook over moderate heat, stirring, until golden brown and crisp, 5 minutes. Drain on paper towel

Garnish with the fried ginger and scallions and serve.

Serves 12

Panaeng Curry with Beef

3 lbs beef, cut into 1.5-inch cubes (chuck roast)
 1 13.5-ounce can of coconut milk
 2 oz to 4 oz Panaeng curry paste (depending on heat level)
 3 tablespoons of natural, creamy, unsweetened peanut butter
 6-7 fresh kaffir lime leaves, cut into very thin strips
 1-2 jalapeños, cut on a diagonal lengthwise
 Fish sauce
 Palm sugar

In a saucepan, set over medium-high heat, heat up the coconut "head" (the thick part that rises to the top of the can) along with the curry paste, stirring constantly.

When the mixture starts bubbling up around the edges and the coconut cream starts to separate, stop stirring and let it boil gently.

Turn the heat up a little and add the beef.

Stir to make sure the beef is all coated with the curry sauce. Add half of the coconut "tail" (the remaining thin, watery part) and just enough water to cover the beef.

Add about 3 oz of fish sauce and 1 1/2 tablespoon of chopped palm sugar to the pot and bring the whole thing to a boil.

Immediately turn the heat down and let the curry simmer gently, covered, for 45-60 minutes. Check on it occasionally to make sure there's no scorching on the bottom of the pot and that the beef is fully submerged in liquid (you may need to replenish the liquid with more water; bring the pot back to a boil and turn down the heat again to resume a gentle simmer).

After 45 minutes, check to see if the beef is tender enough. If not, simmer a bit more. If so, give it a stir, remove the lid, and let the braising liquid reduce down to desired consistency.

Once that is achieved, stir in the peanut butter, half of the julienned kaffir lime leaves, and the red peppers. Correct the seasoning with more fish sauce and palm sugar as necessary; take the pot off the heat.

Serve the curry, sprinkled with the remaining kaffir lime leaf strips, with steamed jasmine rice.

Jasmine Rice

4 1/2 cups water
1 tea salt
1 tea lime zest
3 cups jasmine rice

In a saucepan, combine the water, and salt. Add the rice and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer over low heat for 12 mins. Keeping the pan covered, turn off the heat and let the rice stand for 5 mins.

Uncover and fluff the rice and the lime zest and serve

Thai Iced Tea

4 cups room temperature water
4 cups very cold water
1/2 cup Thai Tea
1 1/2 cups sugar (more or less depending on your taste)
3/4 cup freshly-squeezed lime juice
Ice

Put 4 cups of room temperature water in a pot and bring it to a boil. Turn off the heat.

Add the tea and let it steep for 15-20 minutes.

After 15-20 minutes have passed, add the sugar to the tea and stir until it's completely dissolved.

Add the cold water to the mixture to bring the hot tea to room temperature.

Strain the sweetened tea into a large pitcher.

Stir in the lime juice.

Serve over ice.

Grilled Bananas With Palm Sugar Coconut Sauce

12 Ripe Small Bananas
3 oz brown sugar
1/2 cup water
1 cup coconut milk
1/2 tea salt
2 Tbl unsalted butter

Make the sauce by heating the sugar, water, coconut milk, and salt in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Once the mixture comes to a boil, turn down the heat to medium and reduce the sauce by approximate 30%.

Stir in the butter. Let it cool. The sauce will thicken up to maple syrup consistency once it's cooled.

In the meantime, peel the bananas and grill or broil them until the exteriors become slightly charred.

Another option is to slice the peeled banana's in half and brush with butter and some of the caramel and put in the oven at 350 until soft and caramelized.

You can dip the bananas in the sauce or arrange them on a platter and drizzle the sauce over them. Serve warm.