Main dishes / Thailand

Coconut Prawn Curry

Tiger prawns simmered in a golden, fragrant coconut curry alive with lemongrass, galangal and fresh turmeric — fresh, quick and bracingly bright. The south of Thailand in a bowl: coconut-sweet, fish-sauce-salty, lime-sour, chili-warm.

Time 35 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 500 g Tiger prawns, shell-on and heads on
- ☐ 400 ml Full-fat coconut milk (1 can)
- ☐ 40 g Lemongrass stalks, outer layers removed, bruised
- ☐ 20 g Galangal, thinly sliced
- ☐ 10 g Fresh turmeric, grated (or 1 tsp dried)
- ☐ 60 g Shallots, thinly sliced
- ☐ 15 g Garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ☐ 30 ml Fish sauce
- ☐ 15 g Palm sugar or soft brown sugar
- ☐ 6 pcs Kaffir lime leaves (fresh or frozen)
- ☐ 20 g Fresh red chilies, deseeded and sliced
- ☐ 15 g Thai basil leaves
- ☐ 30 ml Fresh lime juice
- ☐ 30 ml Coconut oil or neutral oil

Let's make it.

01 Heat the coconut oil in a wide wok or pan over medium-high heat. Add the shallots and cook, stirring, for 3 minutes until softened and slightly golden. Add the garlic, galangal slices, and sliced lemongrass. Cook 1 minute. Add the fresh turmeric and chili slices. Stir-fry for another 2 minutes — the kitchen should fill with a sharp, citrusy, spicy fragrance. The aromatics should be softened and fragrant but not browned — you are blooming, not frying.

02 Pour the coconut milk into the pan, scraping any golden bits from the bottom. Add the kaffir lime leaves, fish sauce, and palm sugar. Stir to dissolve the sugar. Bring to a gentle simmer over medium heat — do not boil hard, which breaks the coconut milk and makes the sauce grainy. Simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the sauce is fragrant and slightly thickened. Taste: it should be savory-sweet-salty with a sharp citrus note from the lime leaves.

03 Add the shell-on prawns to the simmering sauce, pressing them beneath the surface. Simmer gently for 3–4 minutes — shell-on prawns take slightly longer than peeled but the shells release flavor into the sauce. The prawns are done when they are uniformly coral-pink and have just turned from translucent to opaque at the thickest part. Do not boil or overcook. Pull from heat immediately.

04 Off the heat, add the lime juice and taste. Adjust the balance: more fish sauce if it needs salt and depth, more palm sugar if it needs sweetness, more lime if it needs brightness. The four Thai taste pillars — sweet, salty, sour, and hot — should be in balance, each present but none dominating. Tear the Thai basil leaves over the top. Serve immediately over jasmine rice.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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