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Red Thai Curry with Fall Vegetables

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Introduction:

Making a Thai curry is a great way to feature the season?s best vegetables. If you always keep coconut milk and Thai curry paste on hand, you can combine just about any fresh vegetables in a main dish that takes less than an hour. The terms ?red curry? and ?green curry? are not always an indication of the color of the final dish?they simply represent the color of the hot chiles the curry paste is made from. (And unless you have an asbestos palate, this is a small amount, whether red or green.) When making a red curry, I like to add mild paprika, turmeric, and at least one red or orange vegetable to heat it up visually, but you can also turn up the burn with more curry paste if your diners like it that way. I usually pass hot sauce at the table in an effort to please all. This curry can be served on top of rice, can stand alone as a rich stew, or can be served as a side dish with grilled seafood or meat.

Preparation:

1. Shake 1 can of the coconut milk vigorously, open it, and pour 1 cup of the coconut milk into a large saucepan. Stir over medium heat until it has thickened slightly, 3 minutes.
2. Gradually add the red curry paste, turmeric, and paprika, stirring constantly with a spatula or whisk. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring, for 3 minutes.
3. Shake the remaining can of coconut milk, open it, and add it along with the remainder in the first can. Stir in the sweet potatoes and the onions. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring frequently, for 15 minutes.
4. Add the cauliflower and cook until all the vegetables are tender and the sauce has thickened, 15 minutes. Season with salt.
5. Sprinkle the scallions over the top, and pass the hot sauce at the table.

CNotes: Coconut milk, usually sold in 131/2- or 14-ounce cans, is very perishable once the can is opened, but an opened can can be stored in the refrigerator for a few days. You can use ?light? coconut milk here, but the sauce won?t be quite as thick and flavorful. Some Thai curry pastes come in glass jars, some in cans. Both will keep for several months after opening if refrigerated. When using the canned type, remove any unused paste and refrigerate it in a sealed glass container.

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