

Kuku na Nazi (Chicken with Coconut Milk)

Serves 8-10

Ingredients:

2 3-lb chickens, cut into pieces
5 inches fresh ginger, grated, or 2 tblsp. ground ginger
20 small cloves garlic
2 hot chili peppers or 1 tsp. cayenne pepper
1 medium onion, sliced
2 tblsp. oil
2 tblsp. curry powder
1/3 cup clarified butter (see directions below)
1 bunch of fresh coriander, chopped
1 tblsp. whole cumin seeds, pounded
4-6 cups coconut milk (see directions below)
1 cup coconut cream (see directions below)

Directions:

Wash the chicken and pat it dry.
Pound the ginger, garlic, chilies, and curry powder with a mortar and pestle, or puree in a blender or food processor.
In a small skillet, saute the onions in oil for 4-5 minutes, then add the spice puree and simmer.
Braise the chicken in butter in a large skillet or stew pot.
When the chicken pieces are golden brown, transfer the onion/puree mixture to the chicken pot.
Add coriander, cumin, and coconut oil, and cook until the chicken is tender.
Pour coconut cream over the chicken, remove pot from heat, and let stand until ready to serve.
To eat, spoon over rice.

Clarified butter:

Makes just under 1 cup
8 oz. (2 sticks) butter
Cut the butter into pieces and melt it in a saucepan over low heat.
Skim off the buttermilk fat that will foam to the top with a slotted spoon.
Remove the pan from the heat.
Let it sit for a few minutes, and then pour off the clear liquid, leaving behind the residue of milk solids that has settled to the bottom.
The clarified butter will last 3 weeks or so if refrigerated.
If no refrigeration is available, simmer the butter over the lowest heat, uncovered and undisturbed, for 40-50 minutes.
Strain the clear liquid two or three times by pouring it through a clean, finely-woven cloth into a bowl.
This removes any solids that might spoil it.
The clarified butter will now remain fresh for several weeks at room temperature.

Coconut milk:

Makes about 3 cups

fresh white meat of 1 coconut

Grate the meat by hand or process it in a blender.

To extract the flavorful moisture from the gratings, it is easy to mimic the Africans' method of using a conical woven basket.

Line a bowl with a cotton cloth such as cheesecloth, making sure that the lining is big enough to drape over the sides of the bowl.

Dump the grated coconut onto the cloth and then pour 1 cup of boiling water over it. When it is cool enough to handle, gather the edges of the cloth and lift it above the bowl.

Wring it with both hands to squeeze out the milky liquid, which you should pour off and save.

Repeat this process three times.

The first squeezing is the most concentrated, so you should keep each squeezing separate and use them in order (i.e., use the first squeezing as the first cup in a recipe, etc.).

Coconut cream:

Coconut cream has two different meanings, either of which can be used for recipes.

"Cream" sometimes means simply the first squeezing (see the above recipe for coconut milk).

Another meaning is the thicker layer that forms on top of chilled coconut milk.

Coconut cream will remain good for 2 or 3 days if refrigerated, and can be frozen for several months.