

Fish Curry

By Tom Dickson

Preparation Time: 45 min. | Cooking Time: 35 min. | Serves: 4



Montana has many things to offer residents and visitors, but spicy, aromatic food is not on the list. Especially lacking are restaurants that serve curry dishes—spicy, aromatic stews considered worldwide to be among the most flavorful foods.

Fortunately, curries are easy to make at home. And because they work with all types of fish and meat, including game, they provide a welcome addition to any household working its way through a freezerful of venison, perch, kokanee, or other fish and game.

Curry is two things: a powdered combination of spices—usually turmeric, coriander, and cumin—and any dish made using that powder, sometimes with the addition of coconut milk. A typical curry recipe starts by browning onions, ginger, and garlic in oil or butter, adding curry powder and a cinnamon stick along with stock and coconut milk, then adding tomatoes and meat or fish. The ingredients are covered, cooked awhile longer, then ladled over cooked white rice.

Curries are most prominent in Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent, where each country or region is known for distinct variations. It's a lot like barbecue in the United States, where styles and flavors vary widely from state to state and region to region.

Learning the various forms of curry is a fine culinary art practiced by master chefs. All most of us need to know is that a curried game dish tastes out of this world. Here I offer an easy fish curry you can use with any Montana fish species.

If you and your family like this dish and want to try versions for curried venison or pheasant, visit the *Montana Outdoors* website and look under “Recipes.” 🐘

—Tom Dickson is editor of *Montana Outdoors*.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb. boneless, skinless fish fillets** (perch, drum, pike, walleye, trout, kokanee, or catfish all work well. Non-anglers can use cod, available in any grocery store.)
- 1 T. vegetable oil**
- ½ onion, grated on large holes of box grater** (this makes for a thicker sauce)
- 2 t. fresh ginger, grated**
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced**
- ½ lb. fresh green beans** (optional), trimmed to 1-inch pieces
- 14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes**
- 2 t. curry powder** (see recipe below)
- ½ t. salt**
- ½ t. black pepper**
- 1 c. coconut milk** (found in any grocery)
- ¼ c. water**
- Cooked white rice** (preferably basmati or jasmine)
- Handful of cilantro leaves, chopped**

DIRECTIONS: Wash fillets and pat dry. Cut into 2-inch chunks.

Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. When oil is hot, add onion, ginger, and garlic. Sauté 5 minutes, until very fragrant.

Use a spatula, potato masher, or your hands to break down tomatoes. Add to pan (along with fresh green beans, if desired) and sauté for another 3 minutes, stirring frequently.

Add curry powder, salt, and pepper. Stir to combine and cook for 2 minutes.

Turn heat to medium-high. Add coconut milk and water. When mixture comes to a boil, add fish and cook for 4 minutes or so, until all chunks are cooked through.

Serve on cooked white rice. Top with cilantro.

HOMEMADE CURRY POWDER

- 2 T. coriander seeds**
- 1 T. cumin seeds**
- 1 T. fennel seeds**
- ½ t. ground turmeric**
- 1 T. crushed red pepper flakes**

In a medium pan, spread pepper flakes and coriander, cumin, and fennel seeds in a thin layer. Toast spices on medium heat, shaking the pan often, until they turn color and become fragrant, about 5 minutes. Cool. Using a spice grinder, old coffee bean grinder, or mortar and pestle, grind toasted spices into a fine powder. Add turmeric and blend once more until everything is combined. Store in an airtight container for up to two months.