

Green Coconut Chicken

For the curry paste

4 lemongrass stalks, tougher outer leaves discarded
6 medium-hot green chillies, seeded and chopped
3 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
5cm ginger, peeled and chopped
2 shallots, peeled and finely chopped
4 tbsp chopped fresh coriander
1 tsp ground cumin
1 tsp grated lime zest
1 tbsp Thai fish sauce
½ tsp ground peppercorns

For the chicken

750g boneless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into thick strips
200g chestnut mushrooms, thickly sliced
400ml tinned coconut milk
400ml chicken stock
8 lime leaves
3 tbsp ground nut oil
1 tbsp Thai fish sauce
1 tbsp bottled green peppercorns, drained
15g fresh coriander leaves, roughly chopped
large bunch of shredded basil leaves

First prepare the curry paste. Put all the curry paste ingredients into a food processor and whiz to a thick paste.

For the chicken, warm the oil in a casserole pan until hot and sizzling. Add in the chicken strips and colour on all sides (this may need to be done in batches). Once cooked through, remove the chicken pieces from the pan with a slotted spoon.

Add the mushrooms and fry until golden (you may need to add a little more oil). Pour in the coconut milk and stock, then add the lime leaves, fish sauce, peppercorns, half the chopped herbs and four heaped teaspoons of curry paste. Bring to the boil then reduce to a simmer for around 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Return the chicken to the sauce, add another tablespoon of the paste and simmer for around 5 minutes. Stir in the last of the herbs just before serving.