



The Daring Cooks' August, 2011 Challenge: Appam and Curry

I can't speak for anyone else (although I'm pretty darned sure I'm speaking for just about everyone).. but THANK YOU Steph for an amazing pasta challenge! And WOW - the creativity that our Daring Cooks showed in the different types of pasta and sauces! Stupendous! I have bookmarked so many recipes that I could eat pasta for dinner every single night for a year. Ohhh how I wish I could, too. :) Terrific job everyone! Thanks for showing us that pasta making without a motorized tool is so simple and delicious, Steph! Fantastic!

Hey let's congratulate [Renee](#) of [Don't Make Me Call My Flying Monkeys](#) for she was the Grand Prize winner of a \$150 Visa card, [Anne](#) of [Cocoa and Quinoa](#) was our 2nd prize winner of a \$100 Visa card, and [Lindsay](#) of [Eat, Knit, Grow](#) was our 3rd place winner of a \$75 Visa card in our [Daring Cooks'/USPB Potato Salad Challenge Contest!](#) Congrats ladies! You've shared some AWESOME recipes! Way to go! :)

Hoping [Anne from Cocoa & Quinoa](#) will see this!! I've written to the email address in your Daring Kitchen profile.. I've written to another email address I found on your blog.. but haven't heard back from you from either email address! :(If I don't hear back from you by the end of August, I'm afraid you'll forfeit your prize for the Daring Cooks'/USPB Potato Salad Challenge Contest! So please write to me with your full name and mailing address ASAP! lamiacucina@adelphia.net Thank you :)

So who wants to write a FoodTalk article? You KNOW YOU DO!! :) Lots of people read the Daring Kitchen's front page, so it's a great place to show off your writing skills and foodie knowledge! :) Email me at lamiacucina@adelphia.net if you are interested.. I've got dates open as soon as the end of this month all the way through the end of the year.

I'm going to let Mary jump right in and get into what promises to be another spectacularly delicious challenge! Have fun this month everyone! :)

Hugs,
Lis
xoxo

Hello! I'm Mary, from Mary Mary Culinary. I love Indian food, so I'm challenging you to make a South Indian yeasted bread called appam and a dish to go along with it. Appam is made simply from rice, yeast and coconut milk. The well-fermented batter is cooked, one bread at a time, on the stovetop. Appam come out like a cross between a crepe and a crumpet, with a thin, lacy, crisp edge and a thicker spongy middle. They are often served for breakfast with a stew in Kerala, but I like them for dinner too. They are the perfect thing for soaking up delicious curries. They are also naturally vegan and gluten-free.

Indian restaurants here tend to serve a lot of North Indian cuisine, things like butter chicken, palak paneer and naan bread. While I love all of those things, I wanted to make something you don't often find in restaurants. I was lucky enough to try appam at a wonderful restaurant in Toronto called Maroli. The restaurant is the only one to serve Malabari cuisine in a city with a lot of Indian restaurants. Appam (which go by many names) are eaten in South India and Sri Lanka, where they are called hoppers. To accompany them, I have chosen a selection of dishes, mostly from Kerala, but also from Goa and Sri Lanka too.



Recipe Source:

Appam: Aparna (a Daring Baker) at [My Diverse Kitchen](#)

Sri Lankan Beef (or Lamb) Curry: Mangoes and Curry Leaves, by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid

Baked Goan Fish with Fresh Green Chile Chutney: Mangoes and Curry Leaves, Alford and Duguid

Shrimp in Coconut Milk: Savoring the Spice Coast of India, by Maia Kamal

Carrots with Tropical Flavors: Mangoes and Curry Leaves, by Jeffrey Alford and Naomi Duguid

Eggplant Curry: Yasmin at [Le Sauce](#)

Malabar Chicken: Chai Pani restaurant via [A Spicy Perspective](#)

Egg Curry: Maroli restaurant via [The Toronto Star](#)

Blog-checking lines: Mary, who writes the delicious blog, Mary Mary Culinary was our August Daring Cooks' host. Mary chose to show us how delicious South Indian cuisine is! She challenged us to make Appam and another South Indian/Sri Lankan dish to go with the warm flat bread.

Posting Date: August 14, 2011

Notes:

1. In my research on appams, I found that everyone had a very strong opinion about the right way to make them! Some insisted that they remain pure white, while others insisted that the edges had to be brown. Sometimes the batter was very thick, other times it was thin. Some cooks swirled it once, others a number of times. The batter could be made with rice, as in this recipe, or with rice flour, roasted rice flour, all-purpose flour, or even with a mix. I tried them all, and found that rice gave me the best results, as well as being the easiest ingredient to find. I used basmati, but none of the recipes specified a type of rice, so use what you've got. What the recipes did have in common was a cooked grain to help with fermentation. It can be cooked rice, as here, or cooked semolina or even bread. Traditionally alcohol was used, but yeast is more common today.
2. All of the ingredients here can easily be found at a store that stocks Indian/Sri Lankan ingredients. If you can't find fresh curry leaves, they are sometimes available frozen, and even dried. Tamarind can also be found at stores selling Asian ingredients. If you're not up to grating fresh coconut, look for frozen, as the texture is much better than dried.
3. None of the recipes are tremendously spicy, but there is some chile heat and a great depth of flavor. Reduce the number of cayenne chiles, and remove the seeds and ribs for a less spicy dish.
4. There is a special pan for making appams that looks like a very small wok – about 23 cm (9 inches) in diameter at the top. They make pretty appams, but are not necessary. I have used the 2 small non-stick skillet I have: one is 12 cm (4¾ inches) in diameter and the other is 20 cm (8 inches) in diameter. You may not get as much of the crisp edge, but they will still be very good.

Mandatory Items: The **appams**, and at least **one** South Indian/Sri Lankan accompaniment, or more, if you like! You must use the appam recipe in the challenge.

Variations allowed: I have written or linked to a variety of accompaniments. You may choose one (or more) of these, or make another to go with the appam. However, I ask that the accompaniment be a South Indian or Sri Lankan dish, as that's where appam are most commonly eaten. If you are not sure what to look for, look for Kerala recipes. Typical ingredients are coconut/coconut oil/coconut milk, mustard seeds, curry leaves, turmeric and green chiles. If you are allergic to/can't stand coconut, both the appam and the eggplant curry can be made with whole milk substituting for the coconut milk. You could try replacing the coconut milk with whole milk or whole milk yogurt in the other recipes too, but I have not tried this, being a coconut fanatic! If you do use yogurt, add it at the end, and do not boil or it will separate.

Preparation time: Soaking the rice: 3 hours

Fermenting the batter: 8-12 hours (8 hours if it's hot in your kitchen, longer if it's cooler)

Mixing the batter: a few minutes

Cooking the appam: 2-3 minutes each

Equipment required:

- large bowl for soaking rice and fermenting batter
- blender or wet/dry grinder or mortar and pestal
- sieve
- small ladle
- small frying pan/skillet (preferably non-stick) with a lid
- small heatproof spatula

Appam

Servings: Makes about 15. I find 3-4 are enough for a serving

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups (360 ml/300 gm/10½ oz) raw rice
1 ½ teaspoons (7½ ml/5 gm) active dry yeast
2 teaspoons (10 ml/9 gm) sugar
½ cup (120 ml) of coconut water or water, room temperature
1 ½ tablespoons (22½ ml/18 gm) cooked rice
½ teaspoon (2½ ml/3 gm) salt
about ½ cup (120 ml) thick coconut milk (from the top of an unshaken can)

Directions:

1. Soak the raw rice in 4 to 5 cups of water for 3 hours. You can soak it overnight, although I did not try that.
2. Dissolve the sugar in the coconut water or plain water and add the yeast. Set aside in a warm area for 10-15 minutes, until very frothy.



3. Drain the rice and grind it in a blender with the yeast mixture to make a smooth batter. You can add a bit of extra water if needed, but I did not. Add the cooked rice, and grind/blend to combine well. You can see that it is not completely smooth, but very thick – that's about right.



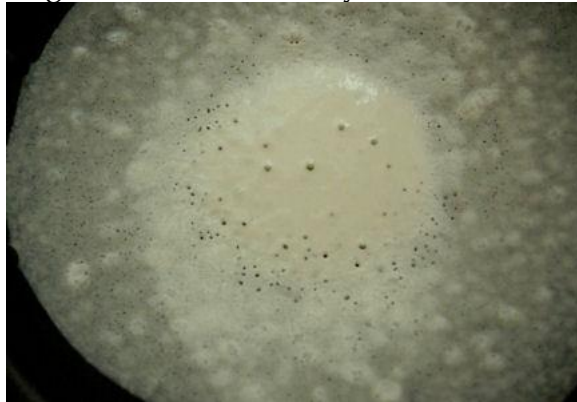
4. Pour into a large bowl, cover and leave in a warm place for 8-12 hours. You not only want the mixture to rise and collapse, but to ferment. When it is ready, it will have a slightly sour and distinctly yeasty smell. Don't worry--they are mild tasting when cooked!



5. Add the coconut milk and salt, and a bit of water if necessary, so that you have a batter that is just a bit thicker than milk. Notice how it bubbles after you add the coconut milk. I recommend test-cooking one before thinning the batter.



6. Heat your pan over medium heat. Wipe a few drops of oil over it using a paper towel. Stir the batter and pour in 3-4 tablespoons, depending on the size of the pan. Working quickly, hold the handle(s) and give the pan a quick swirl so that the batter comes to the top edge. Swirl once only, as you want the edges to be thin and lacy.



7. Cover the pan and cook for about 2 minutes. Uncover and check. The center should have puffed up a bit, and will be shiny, but dry to the touch. When ready, loosen the edges with a small spatula and serve immediately. These need to be served hot out of the pan.



8. Make another, and another... Here you can see some that were made in regular skillets.
9. I have found that the leftover batter can be refrigerated for a day or 2.



Optional accompaniments: choose from here, or make your own dish(es)



Carrots with Tropical Flavors

Servings: 4 as a side dish

This is a simple and tasty way to serve carrots. It is creamy and with a bit of chile heat. Serve as a side with one of the saucy curries.

Ingredients:

- 1 pound (½ kg) carrots, about 5 medium, peeled
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) vegetable oil
- about 8 fresh curry leaves
- 2 tablespoons (30 ml/15 gm) minced seeded green cayenne chiles
- 3 tablespoons (45 ml/27 gm) minced shallots
- 2 teaspoons (10ml) rice vinegar (I used lime juice)
- 1 teaspoon (5 ml/6 gm) salt
- ¼ teaspoon (1¼ ml/1 gm) sugar
- ½ cup (120 ml) coconut milk
- ¼ cup (50 ml) water
- coarse salt, optional
- cilantro (coriander) leaves to garnish



Directions:

1. Julienne or coarsely grate the carrots. Set aside.



2. Place a deep skillet with a tight-fitting lid over medium-high heat. Add the oil, then add half of the curry leaves, the chiles and the shallots. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring.
3. Add the carrots, stir, and add the vinegar, salt, sugar and mix well. Increase the heat and stir-fry for 2-3 minutes, until they give off a bit of liquid.

4. Add the water and half of the coconut milk and bring to a fast boil. Stir, cover tightly and cook until just tender, 5-10 minutes, depending on size. Mine took about 5 minutes. Check to ensure the liquid has not boiled away and add a little more water if it is almost dry.
5. Add the remaining coconut milk and curry leaves. Simmer for 2-3 minutes. Remove from the heat and taste for seasoning. Sprinkle with coarse salt, if desired, and garnish with chopped cilantro leaves.



6. Transfer to a plate and serve hot or at room temperature.

Sri Lankan Beef (or Lamb) Curry

Servings: 4 (though 6 of us finished a double recipe!)

This curry has an amazing depth of flavor from the spices, coconut milk and tamarind. It may look like a lot of sauce, but you will just want more.

Ingredients:

- 1 pound (½ kg) boneless beef (such as round steak or roast), or about 1 ½ pounds (¾ kg) short ribs or cross ribs (or boneless lamb shoulder)
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml) vegetable oil
- 10 fresh or frozen curry leaves
- 1 green cayenne chili, finely chopped
- generous 1 cup (250ml/250 gm/9 oz) finely chopped onion
- 1 teaspoon (5 ml/3 gm) turmeric
- 1 teaspoon (5 ml/6 gm) salt
- ½ cup (120 ml) coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml/15 gm) tamarind pulp
- ¼ cup (60 ml) hot water
- 3 cups (720 ml) water

Dry Spice Mixture:

- 1 tablespoon (15 ml/13 gm) raw white rice
- 1 tablespoon (15 ml/10 gm) coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon (5 ml/4 gm) cumin seeds
- one 1-inch piece (2½ cm) cinnamon or cassia stick
- seeds from 2 pods of green cardamom

Directions:

1. Cut the beef into ½ inch (13 mm) cubes or separate the ribs. Set aside.
2. In a small heavy skillet, roast the dry spice mixture over medium to medium-high heat for 3 to 4 minutes, stirring continuously, until it smells amazing! You will be able to see that the rice is a toasted color.



3. Transfer to a spice grinder or mortar and grind/pound to a powder. Set aside. Chop the tamarind pulp and soak it in the hot water. Set aside



4. In a large, wide pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the curry leaves, green chile, onion and turmeric and stir-fry for 3 minutes. Add the meat and salt and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally so all surfaces of the meat get browned.



5. Add the reserved spice mixture and the coconut milk and stir to coat the meat. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally.



6. Press the soaked tamarind through a sieve placed over a bowl. Use a spoon to press all the liquid and pulp out. Discard the seeds and stringy bits. Add the tamarind liquid to the 3 cups of water.

7. Add the tamarind/water mixture to the pot and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and cook uncovered at a strong simmer for about an hour, until the meat is tender and the flavors are well blended. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Serve hot.



Shrimp in Coconut Milk (Chemeen Pappas)

Servings: 6

This is a creamy, spicy and delicious shrimp dish. When you cut the shrimp in half lengthwise, they curl like corkscrews.

Ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons (45 ml) vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon (5 ml/3 gm) mustard seed
- 1/8 teaspoon (2/3 ml/1/2 gm) fenugreek seeds
- 10 fresh or frozen curry leaves
- 2 cups (480 ml/480 gm/1/2 lb) thinly sliced onion
- 2 teaspoons (10ml/8 gm) minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon (5ml/4 gm) minced ginger
- 2 fresh green chiles, split lengthwise
- 2 teaspoons (10 ml/10 gm) tomato paste

Ground masala

- 4 teaspoons (20 ml/7 gm) ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon (2 1/2 ml/1 1/2 gm) paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon (1 1/4 ml/3/4 gm) cayenne
- 1/4 teaspoon (1 1/4 ml/3/4 gm) black pepper

1 1/4 teaspoons (6 1/4 ml/7 1/2 gm) salt

3/4 cup (180 ml) coconut milk

1 1/2 pounds (750 gm) medium or large shrimp, shelled and deveined and sliced in half lengthwise if large



Directions:

1. In a large skillet with a lid, heat the oil over medium heat. When hot add the mustard seeds and cover until they stop popping. Add the fenugreek seeds and stir until they color lightly. Add the curry leaves (they will sputter and spatter), wait about 20 seconds, then add the onions and fry until they are soft, but not brown.

2. Add the ginger, garlic and green chiles and cook for one minute. Add the tomato paste, dry masala and salt and stir and fry for another minute. If it dries out, add a few drops of water.





3. Add $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (120 ml) of the coconut milk, along with 1 cup (240 ml) of water. Increase heat to medium-high and cook at a strong simmer, uncovered for 5-10 minutes to thicken the sauce and blend the flavors.

4. Add the shrimp, and cook, stirring, until they have all changed color and curled up. This will take less than 5 minutes, depending on the size of the shrimp. Add the remaining $\frac{1}{4}$ cup (60 ml) of coconut milk, bring to a boil and remove from the heat. Taste for salt and serve immediately.



Baked Goan Fish with Fresh Green Chile Chutney

Servings: 4

This is a moist and very flavorful fish, with a beautiful fresh green chutney. It can be served cold or warm.

Ingredients:

One 2-pound (1 kg) firm fish, such as pickerel, trout or red snapper, cleaned and scaled
about ¼ cup (60 ml) vegetable oil
about 8 fresh curry leaves
2 tablespoons (30 ml) fresh lime juice
1 tablespoon (15 ml/18 gm) fine sea salt
½ cup (120 ml/110 gm) Fresh Green Chile Chutney, plus extra to serve as a condiment (recipe follows)

Directions:



1. Place a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to moderately hot 400°F/200°C/gas mark 6.
2. Wash and dry the fish. Cut a slit along each side of the backbone, running the length of the fish. Line a baking sheet with foil and oil with 3 tablespoons (45 ml) of the oil.
3. Rub the fish inside and out with the lime juice, then with the salt. Stuff some of the chutney into the slits you made, and put the rest in the belly cavity. Place the fish on the oiled foil and rub the remaining oil over it. Wrap the fish tightly, using more foil if necessary.

4. Bake for about 30 minutes. To test, peel back the foil and flake a bit of the fish with a fork. If it flakes, it is done.
5. Serve warm or at room temperature. I let mine cool, then re-wrapped and refrigerated it overnight. Serve with the pan juices and the chutney.



Fresh Green Chile Chutney

Ingredients:

2 cups (480 ml/120 gm/4¼ oz) packed cilantro (coriander) leaves and stems
6 green cayenne chiles, coarsely chopped
6-10 medium garlic cloves, chopped
2 teaspoons (10 ml/6 gm) minced peeled ginger
about 1 cup (240 ml/80 gm/2¾ oz) fresh or frozen grated coconut
1 teaspoon (5 ml/3 gm) cumin seeds, coarsely ground
3 tablespoons (45 ml) fresh lime juice
1 teaspoon (5 ml/4½ gm) sugar
1 teaspoon (5 ml/6 gm) salt, or to taste



Directions:

1. In a food processor, combine the cilantro, chiles, garlic and ginger and process to a paste. Add the coconut and process until blended. Transfer to a bowl.
2. Add the cumin, lime juice, salt and sugar and mix well. Taste for seasoning (it will be hot!). Keeps for about 4 days refrigerated.

Freezing and Storage Instructions:

The appam batter can be kept refrigerated for about 2-3 days, but the cooked appams need to be eaten hot out of the pan.

The curries will keep, cooled and refrigerated for a few days, and will taste fantastic reheated gently. I don't recommend freezing them, as the texture is not always as nice when thawed.

Additional Information:

A Daring Kitchen Food Talk article on [Kerala Cuisine](#), with more recipe links
[Toronto Star newspaper article](#) about the restaurant that was the inspiration for this challenge
[Essence of Kerala Cuisine](#) -links to many recipes and Kerala blogs
[Appam making video, and chicken stew too, in English](#)
[Appam video--not in English](#)

Disclaimer:

*The Daring Kitchen and its members in no way suggest we are medical professionals and therefore are NOT responsible for any error in reporting of "alternate baking/cooking" ingredients. If you have issues with digesting gluten, then it is YOUR responsibility to research the ingredient before using it. If you have allergies, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure any ingredient in a recipe will not adversely affect you. If you are lactose intolerant, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure any ingredient in a recipe will not adversely affect you. If you are vegetarian or vegan, it is YOUR responsibility to make sure any ingredient in a recipe will not adversely affect you. **The responsibility is YOURS regardless of what health issue you're dealing with. Please consult your physician with any questions before using an ingredient you are not familiar with. Thank you! :)***