



Sri Lankan Fish Curry - “Kirata” (Milkier)

Recipe by Lak from Little Lanka

INGREDIENTS

400g (2 fillets) hake fish
1 cup all-purpose flour
Vegetable oil, for deep frying
1 teaspoon chilli flakes
150ml coconut cream
50ml Water
1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1/2 onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
2 green chillies, sliced
(adjust to taste)
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin
1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder
1 teaspoon chilli powder
(adjust to taste)
3 - 4 curry leaves
1/2 cinnamon stick
1/2 of Fresh Tomato sliced
1 teaspoon Soy Sauce
1/4 cup chopped Leeks
Salt, to taste
1/4 Fresh lemon

DIRECTIONS

- Dice each fillet into 6 pieces.
- Coat with chilli flakes, a pinch of salt, a dash of soy sauce and flour.
- Heat vegetable oil in a deep frying pan over medium-high heat. Fry the fish pieces until golden brown and cooked through.
- Drain on paper towels and set aside.
- In a separate saucepan, heat vegetable oil over medium heat. Add the curry leaves, chopped onion, garlic, and green chillies. Sauté until the onions are soft and translucent.
- Add the ground coriander, cumin, turmeric, and chilli powder. Cook for a minute until fragrant.
- Stir in the tomato paste, the coconut cream, the water and the cinnamon stick. Season with salt to taste. Bring the mixture to a gentle simmer and let it cook for 5-7 minutes, allowing the flavours to meld together.
- Gently add the fried fish pieces to the simmering curry sauce, making sure they are coated evenly.
- Let the curry simmer for another 2-3 minutes, allowing the fish to absorb the flavours of the sauce.
- Remove from heat and discard the cinnamon stick.
- Squeeze the lemon wedge, stir and serve hot with a side of rice.



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CHEFS NOTES

What are their top 5 tips for making the quintessential Sri Lankan Fish Curry

- 1) Use good quality and appropriate fish - most white fish will do but we suggest Hake, Basa or Nile perch
- 2) Use fresh ingredients
- 3) Do not go overboard with the spices - taste test as you cook and keep it balanced
- 4) Allow the curry to simmer slowly over low heat after adding the fish. This allows the fish to absorb the flavours of the curry
- 5) As with most seafood do not forget the squeeze of lime at the end!- the souring agent balances the richness of the coconut milk and spices.

What makes a curry Sri Lankan?

Being an island nation, coconuts have played a significant role in the evolution of Sri Lankan cuisine. This means that you'll find some sort of coconut used in almost every Sri Lankan curry. Luckily, coconut milk is vegan, gluten-free and dairy-free so pretty much anyone can enjoy our curries. The other speciality is the blend of spices that we use such as cinnamon, cardamom and turmeric. Which is found in other Asian cuisines but the proportions we use create a unique flavour profile which is difficult to describe and is something to simply be experienced.

Is your recipe from a specific region in Sri Lanka?

There are different ways of cooking but the fish curry we serve is called "kirata" which means milkier and has a coconut milk and tomato base. The fish traditionally used in this curry is milk shark which lives in salt water. So this dish has originated in a coastal region which I suspect to be somewhere at the edge of southern Sri Lanka like Galle. That being said, the style of cooking is popular throughout Sri Lanka and people living in the central regions may use other freshwater substitutes. The exact recipe at our restaurant has been passed down to my dad by his mum and to me has a really homey feeling.



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