

# Burmese Chicken Curry (Kyetha See Byan)



Sean Dooley, Springsong's 2018 Guest Birder, writes: "Simple yet fragrant, this dry curry is one of the few dishes that the whole family (including children with unadventurous palates) happily sits down to eat together. My recipe is inspired by *The Complete Asian Cookbook*, which my father bought to prepare Japanese dishes for my mother during chemotherapy. I watched as he turned himself into a master chef in an act of love to try and bring my mother's appetite back by creating the perfect, irresistible dish. After she died, my father was diagnosed with cancer and I found myself repeating family history, cooking for him to keep up his strength. He protested he hated curries, but I managed to convert him to this one, which he wolfed down with great relish."

## INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- KNOB** of fresh ginger (about an inch or to taste)
- 1 **TSP** turmeric
- ½ **TSP** salt
- 1 **TSP** sesame oil (optional)
- 2 **TBSP** vegetable oil
- 1 **STALK** of lemongrass or 2 strips of lemon rind
- ½ **TSP** turmeric powder
- 2 chicken breasts, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 potatoes cut into cubes
- 2 carrots cut into cubes
- ¼ **TSP** of cardamom powder
- 1 **TBSP** chopped coriander (cilantro) leaves

**SERVES 4**

## METHOD

Roughly chop onion and place in a blender with garlic and knob of ginger. After first blitz, add turmeric and salt and a drop of sesame oil to aid smoothness of blending.

Heat the vegetable oil in a saucepan and add the blended mix. Turn heat down, cover the lid, lifting to stir occasionally so the mixture doesn't stick to the bottom. If it is starting to stick, you can add a little water so that it doesn't burn.

Continue on low heat for 15-20 minutes. The mixture will darken but you will know it is ready to add the other ingredients when it reaches the "see byan" state, which supposedly means "oil return." This is when the water has all evaporated from the ingredients and the oil starts to show around the edges. An even better way to know it's ready is when any acrid smell of the onions has gone, to be replaced by a wonderfully sweet fragrance.

Add the chicken pieces and coat them in the mixture, then add the carrots and potato. Cook on low heat for around 30 minutes. I usually turn off the heat just as the potatoes have become soft but not soft enough to crumble. About five minutes before this, I sprinkle the cardamom in and stir.

Serve with rice and garnish with fresh coriander. Or stuff the mixture into a wrap—roti or tortillas.

