



Photography: Kenneth Theissen



CARIBBEAN SHRIMP CURRY

WITH COCONUT MILK
AND GREEN PLANTAINS

by Chef **Stephen Belgrave** of *The Fish Pot*

Chef Belgrave's seafood bistro menu at *The Fish Pot* comes with Caribbean flair, including a Thai-inspired variation of this comforting dish.

The green plantains and Caribbean shrimp in this recipe make it decidedly Bajan, but the main difference between this curry paste and the Thai red chilli paste that the Chef learned to make in Thailand's northern gastronomic capital of Chiang Mai is that most of its ingredients are from Barbados, including the lemongrass, ginger, garlic, brown sugar, and coriander.

"A lot of our Caribbean cooking is similar to Thai cooking", says the restaurant's longstanding chef. After the lunch rush, he's sitting peacefully in the quiet gazebo of the former 18th century fort, mere steps from a pristine strip of sandy beach north of Speightstown. Local artwork adds colour to the coral stone walls of the dining area, which stretches amidst several rooms adjacent to the covered terrace.

Even the fresh coconut milk he uses is local. "You can buy it fresh from Doris Sung at The Gourmet Shop in The Chattel Village, in Holetown", he says, but you have his permission to use canned milk if you're making this at home.

STEPHEN BELGRAVE

Chef – *The Fish Pot*

Caribbean Shrimp Curry with Coconut Milk and Green Plantains

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp. (15 ml) olive oil
10 large shrimp, peeled and deveined
2 tbsp. (30 g) diced onions
1 clove garlic, minced
1 tsp. fresh thyme leaves
2 tsp. (15 ml) curry paste
2 tsp. (15 ml) soy sauce
2 tsp. (15 ml) fish sauce
1 tbsp. (12 g) brown sugar
¼ cup (35 g) diced and fried green plantains
¾ cup (185 g) coconut milk
½ cup (75 g) red or green bell peppers,
thinly sliced
1 cup (185 g) cooked white rice
Plantain chips and minced chives,
to garnish

Instructions

1. Heat the oil over medium heat.
2. Add the shrimp and sauté for 1 minute, then add the onion, garlic, and thyme.
3. Cook for 30 seconds, then add the red curry paste.
4. Cook the paste for 1 minute, then add the soy sauce, fish sauce, and brown sugar. Let reduce for 30 seconds.
5. Stir in the coconut milk and fried green plantains and simmer for 2 minutes.
6. Add the sliced red or green peppers and cook for 1 minute, or until the peppers are tender-crisp.
7. To serve, divide the rice between two plates and top with the shrimp and vegetables. Garnish with the plantain chips and chives.



HOME-MADE CURRY PASTE

Red curry paste is inexpensive and easy to find, but you can also make your own, as Chef Belgrave does; it tastes fresher and you'll have leftovers for other dishes (like the tender, grilled octopus appetiser with paprika, olive oil and lime juice on *The Fish Pot's* menu). Besides, there's nothing better than the aroma of freshly toasted and ground cumin and coriander. Well, maybe the sweet smell of the grated local nutmeg on top of the restaurant's rum punch...

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp. (5 g) coriander seeds
1 tsp. (2 g) cumin seeds
5 dried red chillies, seeded and soaked in hot water for at least 15 minutes
3 tbsp. (45 g) shallots, roughly chopped
5 cloves garlic, roughly chopped
½-inch piece of ginger, peeled
1 stalk lemongrass, tough outer layer and upper half removed
2 kaffir lime leaves or 2 tsp. freshly grated peel
1 tbsp. (3 g) chopped coriander stems
10 whole black peppercorns
1 tbsp. (15 ml) water or broth (or more), to blend

Instructions

1. Toast the coriander and cumin seeds in a frying pan without oil over medium heat, shaking the pan frequently for 4 minutes, or until aromatic.
2. Grind the spices to a powder in a blender, mortar and pestle, or spice grinder.
3. Add the remaining ingredients and grind until smooth. Add more water or broth if needed.