

Quick cooking

Chicken with Banana Curry Sauce

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

This recipe for chicken will get a meal on the table in about half an hour, but diners may find themselves lingering over the table to savor it.

The dish benefits from a Caribbean influence. Curries from that area often have a mild sweetness, usually from fruit, explains a note with the recipe, which is from "Quick From Scratch Chicken Cookbook" (American Express, \$14.95 paperback). The banana flavor here is very subtle; you needn't worry about your dinner tasting like dessert. Serve the chicken over plenty of hot cooked rice to catch the gen-

erous amount of sauce you will have.

The book has a variety of easy recipes, many using already cooked chicken, with full-page color photos.

Chicken With Banana Curry Sauce

(Preparation and cooking time about 30 minutes)
2 large bananas, cut into pieces
2 tablespoons curry powder
2 teaspoons ground coriander
1 teaspoon dry mustard
3 tablespoons butter
Grated zest of 1 lime
4 teaspoons lime juice
1 1/4 teaspoons salt
1/2 teaspoon fresh-ground

black pepper
3/4 cup water, more if needed
4 bone-in chicken breasts (about 2 1/4 pounds in all), skin removed
1 tablespoon fresh chopped parsley (optional)

Heat the oven to 450 F.

In a food processor or blender, puree the bananas, curry powder, coriander, dry mustard, butter, lime zest, lime juice, salt, pepper and 1/4 cup of the water.

Make a few deep cuts in each chicken breast and put the breasts in a roasting pan.

Pour the curry sauce over the chicken, making sure the sauce gets into the cuts. Roast in the bottom third of the oven until the chicken is just done, about 20 minutes.

Remove the roasting pan from the oven and remove the chicken breasts from the pan. There should be plenty of thick sauce in the bottom of the pan. Set the pan over moderate heat and whisk until the sauce is heated through, adding more water if you want a thinner sauce. Serve the chicken breasts with the sauce over them. Sprinkle with parsley if you like.

Makes 4 servings.

Food writers offer favorite Thanksgiving things

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

The best part of Thanksgiving, past or present?

Everyone has something to say on this.

Food writers from around the nation quizzed by The Associated Press naturally focused on the food, even offering favorite recipes, but also dwelling on the ambiance of warmth the occasion evokes.

The flavors of the day are family and nostalgia.

"It's not Thanksgiving for me without Mama's chicken and dressing," says Debra Hale-Shelton, from Conway, Ark., who grew up in Marked Tree, in the Delta region of Arkansas. "Not stuffing, mind you. Many Southerners don't stuff the bird."

"Rather, the dressing is the main course with strips of turkey or chicken meat cooked inside the dressing. I've tried to get Mama's recipe, to no avail: She doesn't have one."

"She just starts pouring in the broth, adding the crumbled cornbread and biscuits, and tossing in the salt, pepper and, of course, the sage, until experience tells her it's just right."

"We always top off the dressing with Mama's giblet gravy, packed with bits of liver as well as giblets. And on the side, we invariably have green beans, Southern-style. That means they've been boiled for several hours with a chunk of salt pork until they're downright mushy — but ever so good."

Barbara Albright, who lives with her husband and two young children in Wilton, Conn., says "What really makes Thanksgiving special for me is to have my family all together, as we live all over the United States."

"If I am the host, I try to ask each person what dish they are looking for at their Thanksgiving feast — what is the dish that says 'Thanksgiving' to them."

"For my sister, it is creamed onions. For our friend Jay it is the green-bean casserole with the fried onions. He calls it Prairie Woman Green Bean Casserole — his wife, Amy, and I are both from Nebraska."

"My father does not like gravy so the only time my mom makes gravy is on the holidays. I love stuffing and I developed a recipe for a sausage mushroom stuffing a few years ago and now it has become my standard."

Joe Mure, assistant professor in culinary arts at The Culinary Institute of America, Hyde Park, N.Y., loves to cook at home, says his wife, Ginny, the C.I.A.'s media relations coordinator.

"Joe has been teaching cooking for over 20 years," she says. "Over the course of time we have celebrated Thanksgiving with many family and friends. The most requested recipe from his Thanksgiving feasts is his fresh cranberry sauce. The

best part next to the flavor is that the recipe is so simple and easy!"

From another region of the country comes a firmly local menu. "This year our Thanksgiving is going to be 'Totally Kansas,'" says Judith Fertig, acclaimed author of "Prairie Home Cooking" and columnist for the Kansas City Star.

"Everything from soup to nuts, beef tenderloin to wine, yeast rolls to pumpkin will have been grown or produced in Kansas."

She says she'd recently done a story on local wines, and had met a local woman rancher — "and that's how I had this brainstorm."

No turkey. Local free-range turkeys are prohibitive in price — and "We don't really like turkey anyway."

Tommy Simmons, food editor of The Advocate, Baton Rouge, La., has a family story. "He says, she says — My first Thanksgiving with my husband turned out to be a taste-test of Thanksgiving turkey dressings."

"He wanted cornbread dressing. I wanted bread stuffing. He favored his mother's recipe. I preferred my dad's. Anxious to please the love of my life, I made both dressings."

"He was right. The cornbread dressing was tastier. If my dad joins us for Thanksgiving, I'll make a pan of bread stuffing for him, but cornbread dressing is now my favorite, too."

"One other side dish that I make every Thanksgiving even though I'm the only person who enjoys it, is cranberry and orange gelatin salad. The cranberry and orange gelatin, which is really more like a relish because it doesn't firm up, is served in place of cranberry sauce."

"I love it and usually eat a spoon of it the day after Thanksgiving on top of my breakfast cereal."

Food writer Joanna Pruess, of Bedford Hills, N.Y., shares a similar fondness. Each year, she and her family have the great debate about the best stuffing or side dishes, she says, but "there are two things that are traditional in our house."

"One is so hokey: it's the cranberry Jell-O mold my mom has made since as long as I can remember. You use cherry Jell-O prepared with half the amount of water then cooled, one can jellied cranberry sauce, a small can of crushed pineapple that's very well drained, and a half-pint sour cream."

"Mix them with a hand mixer until smooth, then chill in a ring mold."

With Pruess, too, the delicious "day after" drifts into the conversation.

Her family's other tradition, she goes on to explain, is Friday leftovers "because we always make a big bird."

Their leftover dishes range from curried turkey hash and winter vegetable and turkey soup (using the carcass and

even left over veggies) to a giant turkey-zucchini-mushroom lasagna to serve 12.

Joan Cirillo, Portland, Ore., knows exactly what stands out in her mind on Thanksgiving. "That's easy, since my big side is always chutney."

"I look for new chutneys every year but the two I like to make are a plum chutney, and a ginger cranberry chutney from Rick Rodger's 'Thanksgiving 101' cookbook. I've altered it and cut down on the sugar."

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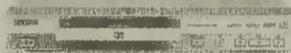
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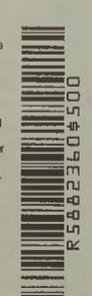
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