

Rick Stein's Mussaman Beef Curry

(Geng Mussaman)

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Rick Stein says: "I found this curry at the hotel I was staying at during filming, the Royal Orchid Sheraton on the Chao Phraya river in the centre of Bangkok. The Thai restaurant there, called Thara Thong, was unexpectedly good, and I say this because you don't usually expect to find a really good restaurant in a giant hotel catering for international conferences. The chef was very much a home-style cook specializing in royal Thai cuisine, albeit with a no-nonsense head-chef demeanour about her. The mussaman curry is the Thai version of the Muslim curries of northern India, made really special by the use of fish sauce, shrimp paste, lemongrass and palm sugar, but the element I find beguiling is the black cardamom, which gives the curry a delightfully smoky flavour.

This recipe is taken from Rick Stein's book – *Far Eastern Odyssey*

Ingredients:

1.5kg blade or chuck steak (cut into 5cm chunks)
600ml coconut milk
6 black cardamom pods
10cm cinnamon stick
300g waxy new potatoes (such as Charlotte)
8 shallots
1 quantity Thai mussamanm curry paste
2 tbsp fish sauce
1 quantity Tamarind water
1 tbsp palm sugar
75g roasted peanuts
Handful of Thai sweet basil leaves (optional)



Method:

1. For the curry, put the beef into a heavy-based pan with 350ml of the coconut milk, an equal amount of water, and the black cardamom pods, cinnamon stick and 1 teaspoon salt. Bring slowly to simmering point, part-cover leaving just a small 1cm gap for the steam to escape, and leave to cook gently for 2 hours, stirring now and then at the beginning of cooking, until the beef is almost tender.
2. Meanwhile, peel the potatoes and cut into 2.5 v 2.5 v 1cm pieces (using a crinkle-edged chip cutter if you wish). Peel the shallots and split them in half.
3. Uncover the curry and remove and discard the black cardamom pods and cinnamon stick. Stir in the rest of the coconut milk, the potatoes, shallots, curry paste, fish sauce, tamarind water and sugar and simmer gently, uncovered, for a further 25–30 minutes or until the potatoes, shallots and beef are tender. Stir in the peanuts, scatter over the basil if using and serve.