

Bob's Curry Chicken over Yellow Rice

This is a great dinner, but there can be/are several steps, so preparing ahead of time helps. I'm not going to give you a specific list of ingredients and/or quantities. You will get the ingredients as you read and the quantities you will have to decide as you go along and for the number of people you are cooking for. This recipe is more like a general cooking class about some things, so bear with me as I try to explain.

So here's the process:

You will first need to make up some of Bob's Mild Curry Powder (you better not have enough in your cupboard as it may not be fresh-ground enough). So you will need to get that recipe ready ahead of time.

As for the chicken, I prefer to use the darker chicken parts. You can use breast meat if you wish, but it will be a bit dryer and not quite as tasty or tender. So what you will need is the thigh as the leg is too difficult to de-bone. So get yourself enough thighs, boneless if you have the money or bone in if you have the time. De-bone the thighs and remove the skin (and extra fat if any – but save it for the schmaltz for another day). Then cut up the meat into 3/8" to 1/2" size peaces. Store them in the frig until you are ready to cook.

Now for the fat. Yep, we use fat to sauté (fry) the chicken and make the sauce. I prefer to use either schmaltz or home made lard. We will also use some butter but that's easy, lets first talk about the other fats first.

Schmaltz is rendered chicken skin and fat with onions and a bit of salt, then filtered to give just the fat. (If you throw away the gribenes you are missing a lot – look it up.) So now you have to get Bob's Schmaltz recipe and make some before your dinner. (This is a great fat to have around so always save the chicken fat and skin so you can make a good batch. It works wonders as a butter or cream cheese substitute on bagels along with the gribenes.) Schmaltz gives a wonderful flavor to the chicken, but if you don't have any and aren't ready to make some try home made lard. (Or you can try to talk a friend out of some!)

Home Made Lard is rendered pork or pig fat. The reason I say home made is because ALL lard that I have seen in the stores is hydrogenated. That is the chemical process to 'harden' the lard and also makes the lard last longer and without refrigeration (does Crisco ever go rancid?). It is also the reason we in America have so much heart trouble. Any fat that is hydrogenated (lard or even corn oil, etc.) will add plaque to your blood vessels and clog your heart (always pass up the oils that say hydrogenated). Now, yes, saturated fats will contribute but not like hydrogenated fats, good lard tastes good and has some vitamins too. So now you need to get Bob's Home Made Lard Recipe.

Now as fats go, those fats that are liquid or very soft at room temperature tend to have less saturated fats. The harder the fat the more saturated. The saturated fat levels are as follows lowest to highest (best to worse): schmaltz, lard, butter, then tallow (beef fat). Within the lards there are three kinds: Pork Bellies (from the belly usually used to make bacon), back fat and leaf lard. Back fat is most commonly used

fat for lard and is good for general cooking. The leaf lard is made from fat that is around the kidneys and is premium fat. It is used in baking fine breads and pastries. Try to make your own fats to use for all your general cooking. Or find a friend that will share some with you!

The rice. Is there a difference? Yep. You may have a favorite rice. If you do, use it for this recipe. Please don't use Uncle Ben's Instant Rice. The flavor of the rice will make a difference. Use a good quality (non-instant) rice. I prefer to use Basmati rice. It has a wonderful slightly nutty taste.

So enough of the cooking lessons already; let's get to the cooking.

I mentioned earlier I would not give you an ingredients list, but I lied. Here's the list of things you will need:

Bob's curry powder

Salt & Pepper

Flour

Ground Marjoram

Ground Turmeric

Chicken Thighs (de-boned, skinned and cut into peaces) I usually estimate about 1 to 1 ½ thighs per person.

Onion (diced)

Garlic (diced) (Go light on this as you don't want to detract from the curry unless you are a real garlic lover.)

Sweet (Bell) Pepper (any color is fine) (Seeds removed and diced)

Butter

Fat (Schmaltz, Lard or what ever you decide to use)

Milk

Cream (half and half is fine)

Rice

For tools you will need:

Some way to cook the rice – rice cooker, pot or I use a rice ball. Your choice

2 heavy fry pans (I like cast iron or a big cast aluminum if I'm making a large amount.)

Plastic bag

Normal cooking utensils

So here's the process

The rice usually takes about 20 minutes, so try to start that 25 minutes before you want to serve.

Put a fry pan to the heat and add some fat to fry the chicken. I am usually a bit stingy with my schmaltz (only because I use it for so many things), so I usually start with half schmaltz and half lard. Then add more lard as I cook the chicken if it needs it.

Place some flour, marjoram, salt and pepper in the plastic bag (I usually blow it up to make sure there are no holes in it), then add the chicken meat a bit at a time. Add some air and shake the bag to coat all the chicken. This may take more than once if you have lots of chicken.

Shake off the extra flour and place the meat in the hot fat and sauté until the outside is nicely browned and the meat is just cooked. It's better to undercook a bit rather than overcook the chicken. Continue until you have added all the chicken in batches if necessary, and set aside the cooked batches. Keep warm if you can.

Without cleaning out the pan, add the onion, garlic, and sweet pepper and cook until soft. Add more fat if needed to cook but not to submerge.

While the onions are cooking take the second large fry pan to the heat and add equal parts butter and schmaltz (or lard) to the pan. Once melted add flour to soak up all the fat. Cook until slightly brown then add equal parts cream and milk to the pan and stir constantly to make a roux (gravy). As it thickens lower the heat some and add a good helping of the curry powder while stirring. Add more milk and/or cream if it becomes too thick. Taste and add more curry if necessary and add salt if you think it needs some. You should make enough of the sauce to have a generous amount for the chicken you have cooked.

Add the already cooked chicken to the vegetables, mix and let everything warm well.

When the rice is done, let it drain if necessary. Place the rice in a large bowl and add enough turmeric to make a nice golden yellow rice. Taste and add some salt and more turmeric if necessary.

Take the chicken and vegetables and add them to the sauce you made. Mix well and keep warm (hot) but be careful not to let it burn.

Dish a good helping of the rice and place the chicken curry and sauce over the rice on each plate and enjoy.

Hopefully you have planned a side dish of some exotic vegetable to go with the curry a darker or green vegetable would look better against the light color of the Chicken Curry. Let's see there's: brussel spouts, stuffed zucchini, even stuffed tomatoes or broccoli.

If you are a wine drinker, I find that a Gewurztraminer goes well with this dish. It's not as harsh as a Chardonnay and not as fruity as a Moscato. However, both the others would work if you are a fan.

This same recipe can be used for Shrimp Curry if you like. Substitute shelled de-veined raw shrimp for the chicken. (Be careful not to overcook the shrimp. Half cook the shrimp and let the sauce finish the cooking to just below fully cooked.) Cut up some of the shrimp and leave some whole. Remove the marjoram from the flour and add a good helping of dill weed. Remove the garlic. Use butter and lard rather than schmaltz.

Of course, shrimp is so good you could make Bob's Shrimp Parmesan over rice or noodles. Then there's shrimp ceviche (yes!) or shrimp jambalaya. Guess I better get to documenting another recipe or two.

Enjoy!

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