



ELEANOR FORD

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CASHEW NUT & LEMONGRASS CURRY

Kaju maluwa ~~~~~ Sri Lanka

Serves 4–6 as a side

The cashew tree, with its extraordinary-looking rainbow fruit and hanging curved seeds we erroneously call nuts, is a member of the sumac family. Native to Brazil, it was brought to Goa by the Portuguese in the 1560s, from where it spread to become a staple of South Asian cookery. In curries, the nuts are often ground into silky sauces, but in this rich and delightful Sri Lankan dish they get star billing: soft, sweet and plump with coconut milk.

There is a similarity between this and the Garlic clove curry (page 189), however the flavour profile is different. Here, fresh stems of lemongrass bring out the slight citrusy notes of both curry leaves and cinnamon, where they sit behind its more obvious sweet warmth.

250g (1²/₃ cups) raw cashews
1 tablespoon ghee or neutral oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
4 garlic cloves, minced
1.5cm (5/8 inch) ginger, peeled and minced (1¹/₂ teaspoons)
10 fresh curry leaves
400ml (1¹/₂ cups) coconut milk
1 scant teaspoon fine sea salt
1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
2 lemongrass sticks, bruised
2 green finger chillies, slit lengthways
1 cinnamon stick
12cm (4¹/₂ inch) pandan leaf (optional)

Soak the cashew nuts in a bowl of water for at least 1 hour, or overnight. Drain and rinse.

Heat the oil in a pan over a medium–high heat. Fry the onion until softened and just starting to turn golden. Add the garlic, ginger and curry leaves and cook for a few minutes, until fragrant.

Add the cashews to the pan along with the coconut milk, salt and turmeric. Drop in the lemongrass, chillies, cinnamon and pandan, pushing them beneath the surface to infuse their flavours into the creamy sauce. Bring to a simmer, then cook on a low heat, uncovered, for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

EAT WITH

Rice, other curries (Beetroot mullum on page 194 perhaps), and a pickle to cut the sweet richness



TURMERIC & TAMARIND JAMU

Jamu kunyit ~~~~~ Indonesia

Serves 4–6

In the royal courts of Java more than a thousand years ago, Indonesian princesses were drinking spicy tonics called jamu, said to sustain eternal youth and beauty. Such flights of fancy aside, they are still widely taken today, both as powerful herbal medicines and for their health-giving properties. The earthy bitterness of turmeric is celebrated in this electric orange elixir – thunder and wonder in the mouth.

100g (3½oz) fresh turmeric
30g (1oz) ginger
1 tablespoon tamarind paste
40g (¼ cup) palm sugar or brown sugar
Juice of a lime

Brush the turmeric and ginger roots clean (no need to peel) and roughly chop. Put in a blender with 800ml (3¼ cups) water and whizz to semi-smoothness.

Pour the orange liquid into a pan and add the tamarind and palm sugar. Cover, bring slowly to the boil and simmer for 10 minutes.

Remove from the heat and leave to cool before adding the lime juice. Strain through a fine sieve, gently pressing the pulp to extract the juice. Adjust sweetness to taste and thin with water if you want a gentler drink.



TURMERIC

