

Hoppers

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THE DISH

Karan Gokani's quick and easy Sri Lankan recipes

The fiery flavours and versatility of Sri Lankan cooking make it perfect for vegetables, says the chef and director of Hoppers restaurants



JOAKIM BLOCKSTROM FOR THE SUNDAY TIMES MAGAZINE. FOOD STYLING: DASUN KAVINDA KUMARAGE

Karan Gokani | Sunday May 03 2020, 12.01am, The Sunday Times

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I have picked a selection of my favourite vegetarian and vegan recipes here as these are healthy, easy, quick and work for all audiences. When cooking for the family, I often make a large batch of dhal or curry without the chilli and then, once I've portioned a bit for our two-year-old, go heavy on the chilli for my wife and myself. This way you cook well, cook only once and everyone eats the same thing. What's more, the devilled sauce, aubergine curry sauce and dhal curry are great to make in bulk and freeze. All you need to do is add the paneer or aubergine when you are ready to cook or eat it.

It's worth noting that these are not all authentic recipes, but tweaked slightly for the British kitchen. Most of the ingredients (or substitutes) can be found at larger supermarkets, but if you're able to visit an ethnic store to stock up on Sri Lankan herbs and spices, you won't regret it.



JOAKIM BLOCKSTROM

Dhal curry

This is a staple side dish in Sri Lanka. It's tasty, easy to make and makes a light, healthy main with bread or rice. I often make a large batch and freeze boxes for quick week-night meals. If reheating from frozen, add a little water for a runny consistency, as the lentils soak up water and dry a bit when frozen. They are best reheated in a saucepan, not the microwave.

- INGREDIENTS**
- 200g split red lentils (masoor dhal)
 - 2 tbsp coconut oil or rapeseed oil
 - 1 tsp mustard seeds
 - 2.5cm cinnamon stick
 - 5cm pandan leaf (optional)
 - 1 stalk of curry leaves
 - 1 large red onion, thinly sliced
 - 3-4 cloves of garlic, minced
 - 4 dried red chillies
 - ¼ tsp turmeric
 - 1 large ripe tomato, chopped
 - 125ml thick coconut milk

01 Wash the lentils until the water runs clear, then drain.

02 Heat the oil in a saucepan on medium. Add the mustard seeds and wait for them to stop popping. Add the cinnamon, pandan, curry leaves, onion, garlic and chillies. Cook until the onions are golden brown. Add the turmeric and tomatoes and cook for 4 minutes. Add the lentils and sauté for 2 minutes.

03 Add water with a ratio of 1:2 lentils to water. Bring to the boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook for 16-20 minutes until the lentils are soft but still hold their shape and most of the water has evaporated. Add the coconut milk and bring back to a simmer and cook for another 6-8 minutes. Season to taste.



JOAKIM BLOCKSTROM

Deville paneer

Deville dishes are a genre of Chinese-Sri Lankan cuisine and hugely popular across the country. Devilled chicken, cuttlefish and prawns are common in restaurants, but for a vegetarian version, this devilled paneer works well. To make it vegan, try it with boiled and flash-fried or roasted new potatoes.

Serves 4 people

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| INGREDIENTS | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 600g paneer, cubed or cut into 2.5cm rectangles • 3 tbsp vegetable oil • 2 banana chillies (or 1 green pepper), cut into 2.5cm squares • 2 Indian green finger chillies (or Thai chillies), finely chopped • 2 tsp chilli flakes • 1 large red onion, cubed • 5cm cinnamon stick • 2 stalks of curry leaves, ideally fresh • 5cm pandan leaf (optional) • 4-5 cloves of garlic, chopped • 2.5cm piece of ginger, chopped • 4 tbsp chopped tinned tomatoes • 2 tbsp tomato ketchup • 1 tbsp cider vinegar • Sugar (optional), to taste • 1 tomato, cut into wedges • 3 tbsp coconut oil or vegetable oil • 2 spring onions, sliced (to garnish) |
|--------------------|---|

01 Shallow-fry the paneer with the oil in a pan until light brown, then set aside. Gently stir-fry the chillies and onion for 1 minute, then set aside on a kitchen towel.

02 Reserve 1 tbsp of the oil in the pan and add the cinnamon, curry leaves, pandan leaf, garlic and ginger. Cook until the garlic turns golden-brown, but don't burn it.

03 Add the chopped tomatoes and ketchup. Cook down until reduced to a thick paste and the oil comes to the top. Add the vinegar and cook for a further minute.

04 Season and add sugar to taste. The sauce should be a balanced spicy, sweet and sour. Add the tomato wedges and cook for a further minute.

05 Return the paneer, chillies and onions and toss till fully coated in the sauce and heated through. Garnish with the spring onions.

Tempered potato and okra

Tempered dishes are lightly stir-fried vegetable dishes flavoured with dried spices sautéed in oil. This allows the vegetables to retain their shape, flavour and texture, but still adds a nice layer of flavour in the background. You can skip the okra if you don't like it (I love the vegetable) or can't find it. Sweet potato is a great alternative to potato if you want to try something different.



JOAKIM BLOCKSTROM

Tempered potato and okra

Serves 4 people

- INGREDIENTS**
- 500g potatoes, peeled and cut into 2.5cm cubes
 - ½ tsp salt
 - A pinch of turmeric
 - 3½ tbsp coconut or vegetable oil
 - 200g okra, washed, dried thoroughly and cut into 2.5cm pieces
 - 1 tsp mustard seeds
 - 2.5cm cinnamon stick
 - 5cm pandan leaf (optional)
 - 1 stalk of curry leaves
 - 200g red onions, finely sliced
 - 3-4 cloves of garlic, minced
 - 1 green chilli, finely chopped
 - ½ tsp turmeric
 - 1½ tsp chilli flakes, or less if you don't like it hot
 - 50g ripe tomatoes, chopped

01 Add the potatoes to a pot of cold water with the salt and the pinch of turmeric. Bring to the boil and simmer for 3 minutes. Drain immediately and set aside.

02 Heat 2 tbsp oil over a medium-high heat and fry the okra for 3 minutes until slightly softened but retaining their bright green colour. Set aside on kitchen paper.

03 Heat 1½ tbsp oil on a medium heat and add the mustard seeds. When they stop crackling, add the cinnamon stick, pandan leaf, curry leaves, onion, garlic and green chilli. Cook until the onions are a light golden brown. Add the turmeric, chilli flakes and chopped tomatoes. Cook until the tomatoes form a paste and the oil separates.

04 Add the potatoes and fried okra and gently heat until the vegetables are fully cooked. Test after 5 minutes. Season to taste and squeeze the lime over the top just before serving.



IOAKIM BLOCKSTROM

Roasted aubergine curry

This is a unique sour and spicy vegan curry. At the restaurant we deep-fry the aubergine before adding it to the curry, but a roasted version works better at home. If you can find small aubergines, halve them lengthwise with the stalks on. Using Sri Lankan curry powder is key here. You can order it online, find it at Sri Lankan or South Asian stores or look for a good recipe online. Standard hot Madras curry powder does the trick, but it won't be the same.

Serves 4 people

- INGREDIENTS**
- 500g aubergine, cut into 3cm-4cm cubes
 - 4 tbsp coconut or vegetable oil
 - ½ tsp salt
 - 1 tsp turmeric
 - ¾ tsp mustard seeds
 - ½ tsp fenugreek seeds
 - 2.5cm pandan leaf (optional)
 - 1 stick of lemongrass
 - 5cm cinnamon stick
 - 1 stalk of curry leaves
 - 100g red onions, sliced
 - 3-4 cloves of garlic, minced
 - 2.5cm fresh root ginger, minced
 - 3-4 dried red chillies
 - 1½ tbsp Sri Lankan roasted curry powder (or Madras hot curry powder, toasted for 1 minutes in a warm dry saucepan)
 - 200ml tinned coconut milk
 - ½ tbsp tamarind paste (or ¾ tbsp dried tamarind soaked in 1/3cup of boiling water)
 - 1 tsp sugar (optional)

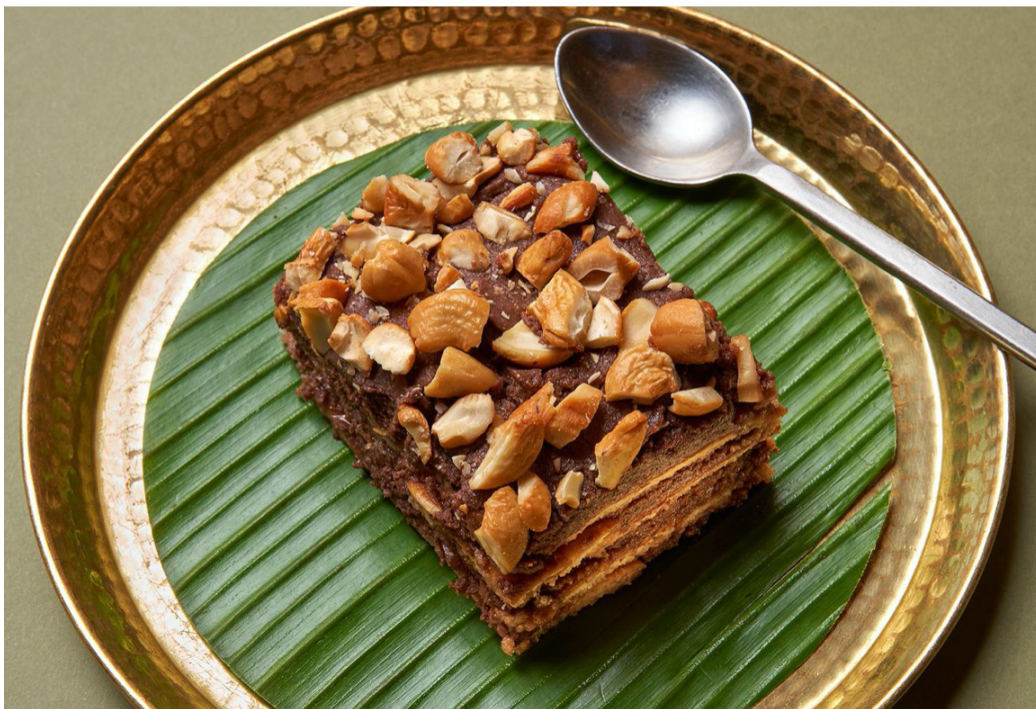
01 Heat the oven to 180C (200C non-fan). Toss the aubergine pieces in 2-3 tbsp oil with the salt and ½ tsp turmeric. Roast for 20 minutes until they are caramelised but not shrivelled.

02 Heat 1 tbsp oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the mustard seeds and fenugreek seeds. When the mustard seeds stop crackling, add the pandan leaf, lemongrass, cinnamon stick, curry leaves, onions, garlic, ginger and dry chillies. Cook until the onions are translucent.

03 Add the curry powder and ½ tsp turmeric, then cook for a further minute, adding a splash of water if they begin to burn. Add the coconut milk and tamarind, then cook over low heat until the liquid is reduced by a third. Add the roast aubergine, stir through well and simmer for 5 minutes over a low heat. Season to taste and add sugar if you like. Serve with steamed or boiled rice.

Chocolate biscuit pudding

This simple refrigerator cake is one of my favourite Sri Lankan desserts, and so easy to make with basic store-cupboard ingredients. Put it together in a transparent dish or individual jars, as the layers look lovely when served. For an extra-indulgent pudding, add 50ml dark rum, Baileys or arrack to the chocolate mix.



JOAKIM BLOCKSTROM

Chocolate biscuit pudding

Serves 4-6 people

- INGREDIENTS**
- 300g unsalted butter, softened
 - 300g icing sugar
 - 100g cocoa powder
 - 300g Rich Tea or Marie biscuits
 - 125ml whole milk, chilled
 - 100g roasted, unsalted cashew nuts, roughly chopped

01 Mix the butter, icing sugar, cocoa powder and a large pinch of salt together in a bowl and whisk well until you have a smooth buttercream frosting.

02 Soak the biscuits in milk for 5 seconds. Don't soak for longer or they will go soggy. Literally dip in, count to three and lift out.

A Sri Lankan tip box

- If you don't have cashews, use any other nuts you have available. Just make sure you toast them well with a pinch of salt
- If using dry curry leaves, soak them in water for an hour before using
- When cooking basmati rice, soak it for 30-60 minutes beforehand. This helps achieve the soft texture you often find in restaurants
- Coconut milk can easily be frozen and used later, so don't waste the tin or overdilute the curry. A great alternative to tinned coconut milk is coconut milk powder, which can be used to create thin or thick milk depending on how much water you use
- Add root vegetables to your dhal curry when boiling it and finish with some greens. Serve over rice (or couscous, bulgur or quinoa, if you're avoiding rice) for a great one-pot meal
- Soak potatoes in a bowl of cold water while you prep the other ingredients. This stops them from turning grey and washes off the extra starch, resulting in a much softer, creamier stir-fried potato

EATING & DRINKING

RECIPE: HOW TO COOK HOPPERS' FAMOUS DEVILLED CHILLI PANEER

HOW TO MAKE DEVILLED CHILLI PANEER FROM HOPPERS

‘There are some legendary dishes in [Sri Lanka](#) and devilled food is one of them. It is Chinese-Sri Lankan and extremely popular across the country. Devilled chicken, cuttlefish and prawns are commonly served in restaurants in Sri Lanka and are always great alongside a chilled beer. At Hoppers we have done various iterations of this dish, and for a vegetarian version, paneer works really well. You can also make it with halloumi, and for a vegan twist try tofu or crisp fried new potatoes. This versatility is what makes it my go-to when I’m looking for a quick meal with some fried rice or noodles.

‘I first tried delicious devilled chicken at the Mount Lavinia Hotel, just outside Colombo, more than a decade ago while watching the sunset and sipping a chilled Lion Lager. So there’s always been that element of nostalgia when eating devilled food here. Note: paneer is not traditional in Sri Lanka; it’s something we’ve played around with to create a tasty vegetarian dish.’ *Karan Gokani*

Ingredients:

Serves 2

- 250g paneer, cubed or cut into 1-inch rectangles
 - 3 tbsp coconut/ vegetable oil
 - 1 tbsp rapeseed oil
 - 2 medium banana chillies (or 1 green pepper), cut into 1-inch slices
 - 1 red chilli (or ½ red pepper), cut into 1-inch slices
 - 1 large red onion, cubed
 - 2-inch cinnamon stick
 - 2 stalks curry leaves, ideally fresh
 - 2 banana shallots, finely chopped
 - 1.5 tbsp garlic paste
 - 1 tbsp ginger paste
 - 2 Indian finger green chillies (or one Thai chilli), finely chopped
 - 1.5 tbsp tomato paste
 - 1.5 tbsp tomato ketchup
 - 1 tbsp cider vinegar
 - 2 tsp chilli flakes
 - Sugar, optional, to taste
 - Salt, to taste
 - 1 tomato, cut into wedges
 - 1 spring onion, sliced (to garnish)
1. Shallow fry the paneer in the oils until light brown and set aside.
 2. Lightly stir-fry the banana chillies, red and/or green chilli and onion for one minute and set aside on a kitchen towel.
 3. Reserve a tablespoon of the oil in the pan and add cinnamon, curry leaves and shallots, along with some salt.
 4. Cook until the onion turns light brown and soft, being careful not to burn it. Add the garlic paste and ginger and cook until nicely caramelised.
 5. Add the tomato paste and ketchup. Cook down until reduced to the consistency of a thick paste.
 6. Pour in the vinegar and cook for another minute.
Season with the chilli flakes and add salt and sugar to taste. The sauce should be a balance of spicy, sweet and sour.
 7. Add tomato wedges and the Indian finger green chilli into the sauce along with the fried paneer, red and/or green chillies and onion and toss for a minute until fully coated in the sauce and heated through.
 8. Garnish with the spring onion and serve immediately.

VANITY FAIR

GREAT PLATES

Recipe of the Week: Parsnip and Okra Curry

A Sri Lankan delight from Karan Gokani and the Hoppers team.



While I adore meat curries, I often prefer a vegetarian option at lunchtime. Not only are these lighter, they're also a lot quicker to make. If you've visited Sri Lanka you've undoubtedly eaten a "rice and curry" lunch. Most restaurants and street side shacks sell this complete one-plate-meal—usually involving white rice, a curry of the day, multiple sambols and salads (or mallungs)—at lunchtime. It's a favourite amongst locals. I've also included a quick recipe for a coconut sambol, should you wish to recreate an abbreviated version of this much loved meal.

Parsnips are possibly my favourite root and are abundant at this time of year. This bright and easy curry combines a nice balance of heat from the chillies and spice, with the sweetness of the parsnip and texture of the okra. I've kept the gravy fairly light, but you could easily dial up or down the richness by adding more coconut milk or reducing it. You might need to add some water or light vegetable stock if reducing the quantity of coconut milk. Finally, this recipe could work equally effectively with sweet potatoes or squash, if you prefer them to parsnips.

Serves 2–3 as a main

Ingredients

350g Parsnip, peeled and cut into 1.5 inch chunks
100g okra
¾ tablespoon garlic paste
1/2 medium onion, sliced
1 small ripe tomato, sliced
1 green chilli, deseeded and slit in 2 lengthwise (optional)
10–12 curry leaves, ideally fresh
3 inch piece pandan leaf (optional)
¾ tablespoon Sri Lankan unroasted curry powder, or medium Madras curry powder
½ teaspoon ground turmeric
½ teaspoon red chilli powder
½ teaspoon mustard seeds
1 cinnamon stick
2 tablespoon coconut oil
1 teaspoon sea salt
75ml good quality thick coconut milk or cream

Method

Heat the coconut oil in a heavy based saucepan over medium heat.

Add the mustard seeds once the oil is hot.

When they begin to crackle add the sliced shallots along with the salt and saute until soft and translucent, about 30 seconds. You don't need to brown or caramelise the shallots, as is often the case in curry recipes.

Add the garlic paste and continue frying for a minute.

Add the whole spices, powders, pandan leaves and curry leaves and fry for a further 30 seconds. Add a splash of water if the spices begin to stick to the pan.

Add the tomatoes and stir on a medium flame until they soften and go pulpy, about a minute.

Add the parsnips and okra and stir well to ensure they are coated in the spices for 3 minutes. Don't worry if the okra starts to go slimy, the slime will disappear once it's fully cooked through.

Pour hot water (or vegetable stock) up to the level of the vegetables. Bring it to a boil and then continue to simmer uncovered for 12 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Add coconut milk, reduce heat to medium-low and simmer for another 7 minutes. Check for seasoning and that the parsnip chunks are soft and cooked through before serving.

This curry goes wonderfully with some steamed basmati rice and a fresh coconut pol sambol on the side.

To make the sambol, place together ½ a cup of fresh or frozen grated coconut, 1.5 teaspoons of bright red crushed chilli flakes, ½ sliced shallot, juice of ½ a lime and a hefty pinch of salt, in a food processor and pulse till everything is combined and bright red. Alternatively, you could use a mortar and pestle to bash them together into a coarse relish as opposed to a pulp or paste.

S U I T C A S E

THE CULTURE OF TRAVEL

14 Chefs Share Bread Recipes from Around the World

Hoppers' Sri Lankan Roti

Flakey and incredibly moreish, Sri Lankan roti is almost a bit like a flattened croissant. The crisp layers require a bit of technique and practice to get right, so the recipe below includes a little extra dough.



Makes 5-6 roti

Ingredients:

- 300 plain flour
- 100g warm milk
- 80-120g warm water
- 2g salt
- 3g sugar
- 1/5 tsp baking powder
- Vegetable or any neutral oil, to brush

Method:

1. Mix all ingredients apart from the oil, and knead well by hand. Don't add all your water at once, hold back about 30g and trickle it in a splash at a time. Stop when your dough is the consistency of a smooth and soft playdough that is moist but doesn't stick to your hands.
2. Bring the dough together in a ball, cover and rest for an hour.
3. Divide into 80-100g balls. Oil each ball well and rest covered for 3-4 hours or over overnight in the fridge.
4. Roll into 2cm thick discs and rest for 2-3 mins. Then carefully stretch the disc on a clean kitchen counter into a rectangle as far as you can without tearing them, or roll out into a very thin rectangle. Brush a thin layer of oil and sprinkle a couple of pinches of flour over it.
5. Roll the dough tightly from top to bottom like a Swiss roll. Then coil the roll into a tight circle, pinching the edge to secure it from unravelling. Rest covered for 10 minutes and then roll out into a 10-12cm disc.
6. Heat a non-stick pan over medium-high heat. Add a teaspoon of oil and fry the roti for a minute. Then flip over and fry for a further minute. Repeat for 15-20 seconds on each side, flipping thereafter, until the roti is golden and crisp. It should take between 3-4 minutes in all.

Pursuits

Sri Lankan Cuisine Is Hot: Why Not Make This Prawn Curry at Home?

Hoppers restaurant gave Londoners a taste for spicy southern flavors.

By Richard Vines

10 October 2020, 00:01 BST

Hoppers restaurant was a sensation when it opened in London's Soho in 2015.

Diners were unfamiliar with Sri Lankan cuisine, and long queues formed. You might wait two hours to enjoy inexpensive dishes, whose spicing was subtly different from the north Indian restaurants for which the city is well known. Five years on and there are now three Hoppers outlets, where you can book tables in advance. The long lines are gone but the popularity and quality remain.

Hoppers' director, Karan Gokani, didn't train as a professional chef. He's a former lawyer and worked for Linklaters before entering the restaurant business. (Hoppers is owned by JKS Restaurants, of which his wife Sunaina Sethi was one of the three founders, with her brothers Karam and Jyotin. Karam is among the U.K.'s most influential chefs, known for restaurants such as Gymkhana.)



Prawn curry as made by the author. *Photographer: Richard Vines/Bloomberg*

But Karan is accomplished in the kitchen. Chef Andrew Wong, who holds a Michelin star at A. Wong, has eaten at his home and describes him as “an amazing cook, a super-talented chef.” Karan grew up in Mumbai in a Gujarati family eating mainly vegetarian dishes, but some of the best food was cooked by a Tamil great uncle. Karan came to love South Indian and Sri Lankan cuisine. (He proposed to Sunaina in Sri Lanka and they married in Kerala.)

For Bloomberg, Karan has supplied a recipe for home-style Sri Lankan prawn curry, or *isso kari*. The only ingredient I had difficulty in sourcing was Sri Lankan roasted curry powder. “It’s vastly different from the garam masalas or the typical Madras curry powders you find on supermarket shelves,” he says. So I knew I wasn’t allowed that short cut and found a jar online.

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He recommends using prawns with heads and shells on, which you can ask a fishmonger to clean and prep for you. But I bought headless fresh prawns from a supermarket and he says that is OK, but you really need fish stock for depth of flavor. Cooked prawns are an absolute no-no as they will go rubbery without absorbing the spices, Karan says.

I enjoyed the dish, which was hotter than I’d anticipated. (It was only later that I noticed the Kings curry powder I used is 32% dried red chilies.) If you don’t want prawns, this recipe also works with mackerel, sardines or fillets of bream or bass. The recipe is supposed to serve three to four people. As usual, I just ate it all myself.

Ingredients:

600 grams of (21 ounces) raw prawns with skin and head on; or a
without shells
1/4 teaspoon fenugreek seeds
2 garlic cloves, minced
1 tsp ginger, minced
1 onion, finely chopped
2 very ripe medium tomatoes, diced
250 milliliters (8.5 fluid ounces) coconut milk
100 ml water or fish stock
10-12 curry leaves, ideally fresh
1 cinnamon stick
2 long green chilies, slit (remove seeds if you prefer less spicy, or
completely if you prefer milder still)
1.5 tablespoons roasted Sri Lankan curry powder
1/2 tsp turmeric
1 tsp chili flakes
1/4 tsp salt
2 tbsp coconut oil

To garnish:

Finely chopped coriander
Lime, cut into 4

Preparation:

Marinate prawns in a pinch of salt and turmeric for an hour.

Heat the oil in a wok or saucepan over medium heat.

Add the fenugreek seeds and stir until they get a shade or two darker in color, but being careful not to burn them or they will go bitter.

Add the cinnamon stick, onion, garlic & ginger and sweat for about 5 minutes over medium heat till the onions go translucent and soft and the garlic doesn't smell raw anymore. The onions don't need to be browned as some recipes call for. If they begin to catch/stick to the pan at any point, add a splash of water or stock and keep cooking.

Add the tomatoes and cook for 3 minutes until soft and pulpy.

Add the curry leaves and remaining spices and cook for a further 3 minutes adding a splash of stock if they stick or burn.

Add the coconut milk and fish stock and salt and simmer for about 10 minutes. Don't allow the curry to boil as the milk could split. If you'd like the curry thicker, simmer it for a little longer until you are satisfied with the consistency.

Add the chilies and prawns and continue to simmer for 4-6 minutes until the prawns turn pink and are fully cooked through. If you use peeled raw prawns they won't need any more than a couple of minutes, depending on their size. Don't overcook or they will go rubbery and hard.

Check seasoning, garnish with coriander and serve with steamed rice or string hoppers and a wedge of lime to squeeze over.

Richard Vines is Chief Food Critic at Bloomberg. Follow him on Twitter [@richardvines](#) or Instagram [@richard.vines](#).

London lunch box: a recipe inspired by Hoppers London

Laoise Casey creates cheap, easy-to-cook lunch boxes inspired by things she has eaten in some of London's best restaurants and cafes #Hopperslunchbox



Two years ago I had the fortune of visiting friends in Sri Lanka where I was introduced to one of its national dishes – the hopper. The name itself is a delight. The hopper is a thin pancake-like wonderful dish with crispy edges made from a batter of ground white rice and coconut milk. My favourite is an egg nestling in it. Staying in the capital Columbo was a joyful overload of the senses: driving down bustling streets trying to take it all in, palm trees, tuk-tuks, a monk walking, monkeys scampering beside you, street vendors, banana trees, breath-taking monuments and the non-stop sound of 102 horns beeping at the same time.

When taking a tuk-tuk, close your eyes and hang on. That's all you need do. And you'll have a story to tell afterwards. As an Irish person from the land of rain, rain and additional showers expected on Sundays, the hot humid weather was my downfall in Sri Lanka. Unless I was installed in an air conditioned space I'd immediately dramatically declare this heat was too hot for anyone and shouldn't we really start thinking about lunch? Many afternoons I took respite from the heat eating (perhaps too many) hoppers.

Very often, you return from your holidays with hopes of trying to re-create that magical holiday dish, and yet you are often left disappointed. I too felt like this when I returned to London and attempted to re-create the hopper. So when I heard about Hoppers London I felt like a wrong was to be immediately corrected. Its menu is based on the family home-cooking of Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka with the hopper and dosa at the centre of the menu.

I visit during its second week of opening, arriving just before 12pm there is already a queue (no reservations).

For our Hoppers London inspired lunch box we're having a version of one of their most popular dishes - Ceylonese spit chicken and gotu kola sambol. A nice feature of Hoppers London is the menu glossary which explains that gotu kola sambol is a pennywort relish with coconut, maldive fish and onions. For our lunch-box friendly version it's a juicy marinated chicken thigh with a simple sambol of cucumber, tomato, coconut and desiccated coconut. Special thanks to Karam for his advice in creating a lunch-box suitable version.

Ingredients

2 chicken thighs

1 tbsp. curry powder

1 stalk lemon grass, crushed

1 clove garlic, thinly sliced

Small piece fresh ginger, thinly sliced

2 tbsp. vegetable oil

½ small cucumber

1 tomato

1 tbsp. desiccated coconut (Karam recommends using fresh coconut if you can)

Small handful coriander

Juice of half a lime

Sea salt, cracked black pepper to season

Cost to make per portion: £3.80

Preparation and cooking time: 4 hours to marinate and 20 minutes preparation and cooking time

How to make it:

In a bowl mix the curry powder, lemongrass, garlic, ginger and 1 tbsp. vegetable oil together. Rub the marinade onto the chicken thighs, season well and leave to marinate for 4 hours or overnight. Preheat oven to 180C. Heat 1 tbsp. vegetable oil in a frying pan on a medium heat and place the chicken thighs in it skin-side down. Cook until the skin is golden brown and crispy. Finish cooking in the oven until tender and cooked through (10 minutes). Meanwhile, dice the cucumber and tomato and combine with the desiccated coconut, coriander and lime juice. Season to taste. Serve the sambol on the side with the chicken.

Hoppers

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