

Chef from the Hood Recipes



Chef:
Tai Olesky

Restaurant:
Nectar Restaurant & Lounge

Recipe:
Mussels with lemongrass coconut curry

Ingredients

2 tablespoons soy bean oil
2 & 1/2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
2 tablespoons minced fresh garlic
1/2 teaspoon dried red pepper flakes
2 & 1/2 tablespoons minced fresh lemongrass
4 cups coconut milk (canned)
2 tablespoons fish sauce (bottled)
1/2 teaspoon green curry paste (Thai style)
2 tablespoons soy sauce (reduced salt is good)
2 pounds live mussels in shells (de-beard, rinse & discard any open mussels)
1 fresh lime to squeeze (+ optional garnish wedges)
2 tablespoons thinly sliced fresh basil leaves
(use the Thai basil variety if it's available)

Prep all ingredients. This dish comes together fast, and can be brought to the table in the same pan you cook in (or in a large, pasta bowl that has been warmed in the oven). Heat oil in a large, heavy bottomed deep sauté or sauce pan. Add ginger, garlic, red pepper flakes and lemongrass. Stir and sauté quickly (about 1 minute), being very careful not to burn garlic. Add coconut milk, fish sauce, green curry paste and soy sauce. Bring to a boil. Add whole mussels. Stir to allow them to reach the sauce. When they are all open, turn the heat off. Squeeze lime over all, and add the basil. Serve from the pan or transfer to a large warm, shallow bowl.

Though Chef Tai Olesky grew up locally, his cooking is influenced by trips he has taken to Australia, Brazil, Cambodia and Thailand. His easy to make curry (a current choice on Nectar's menu) uses fresh lemongrass, ginger, garlic, lime and basil. Often used in Thai cooking, these ingredients are readily available at Fiesta and Pacific. Tai says, "This curry hits your salty, sweet, sour taste buds all at once. Serve it with a local Sauvignon Blanc or even a German Reisling. A pilsner or any light, refreshing beer would also be a good choice." Recipe serves two as a main course or four as a small course.