

Springfest – because it's seasonal beer time again



I can't believe it's that time of year already. It comes round so fast but here we are again preparing for Springfest at the weekend. Those of you who are regular readers to our blog will know that Springfest is our annual celebration of all things sunny and bright, the growth of new things in the garden and the general feeling of fabulousness that comes with the brighter weather. It's a bit like Beltaine for us, Beltaine is the celtic festival of fire. It is the celebration of the winter darkness being defeated by the spring sun and the rebirth of the world around us. That's kinda how we feel.

As is the tradition for Springfest, a beer is brewed for the event using citra hops. Last year Kate designed the beer, this year she has actually brewed the beer ([you can read about her efforts and see the recipe for yourself here](#)), but more than that, so has Luke and Valerie. This year we are having a wee brewing competition where Kate, Luke and Valerie have all brewed up a wee something they are going to bring along and we'll all taste them and pick a winner.

Kate has made a double IPA using citra hops, Valerie has made an elderflower cider and Luke has made a red ale and aged it with cherry wood. Things should be interesting.

As always when we have one of our seasonal parties there will be food to go with the beer and for the theme this year to mark the first Springfest Homebrewing competition, I've gone with a theme of "boozing tasties" or basically the food you eat when you've drunk a little too much. I know you guys like to get your hands on some of the recipes for our "doos" (scottish for party) so here you go.

So amongst other things we are going to be having;



Indian curry

[the recipe is in one of our early blog posts here.](#)



Malay Chicken

Ingredients for 2 people

- Chicken breast x 2 cubed
- Mushrooms about 7 or 8
- Coconut milk
- Malay Spices (I use [Malay Masala](#)) Obviously you can make your own spice blend but i love this one so have stuck with it.
- Lemon grass
- Coriander (cilantro for our US readers) – chopped roughly
- Red pepper – thinly sliced
- Oyster Sauce
- Garlic
- ground nut oil for frying

Method

1. First thing to do hammer the lemon grass to bruise it.
2. Then add it to a high sided pan with a little oil to fry and add the chicken breast. fry off until almost cooked through then add the garlic and mushrooms and let them cook off for a few minutes.
3. Then add the red pepper slices (as these are thinly

sliced they won't take long to soften).

4. You now have the basic ingredients in the pan, it's time to start adding layers of flavour. Add 1 table-spoon of your Malay spice mix and give everything a really good stir to get it all coated. Give it 2 or 3 minutes.
5. Now add the can of coconut milk and again get everything combined by giving the pan a good stir.
6. You now have a nice creamy curry and you can stop there if it's to your tastes but I like to add a couple more things which just make it extra yummy. Mix in 2 table spoons of oyster sauce and a handful of chopped coriander leaves.

There you, really easy Malay curry.

I serve it with rice and some fresh coriander sprinkled over the top but it works just as well with noodles and Kate loves flat breads to soak all the sauce up.

Home style curry

Curry is a generic western term for a dish comprising of a sauce made with a complex mix of herbs and spices which originates from Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Thai or other Southeast Asian cuisines.

The word curry itself is a bit of a mystery but we think it

could have been anglicised from the Tamil word kari meaning 'sauce', which is usually understood to mean vegetables and/or meat cooked with spices with or without a gravy.

Curry is a real favourite of mine, in any form, but I get annoyed at these so called curries where you can't taste anything because there is just so much heat and spice.

A good curry should scream flavour and any heat should be a slow build as background. So you may have guessed, you are never going to see a vindaloo recipe here :0)

One of my favourite things is a good tangy tomato flavour with that background heat, so I'm going to share my recipe for this sauce. As an extra bonus, this sauce works just as well with chicken, lamb or fish (I recently made it with smoked haddock – lovely).

I got this recipe from Santa... Yup you read it right. :0) I was given a fantastic curry recipe book as a present from a secret Santa at work a few years back. It is filled with traditional curry recipes as cooked in the home in India rather than the favourites we all know from takeaways and restaurants.

This recipe is the first curry I learned from the book and I've tweaked it a little since then to make it perfect to my tastes.

Making your curry

The most important step to getting your curry right is the onion. Frying the onions correctly will make a big difference

to both the taste and look of your curry. The secret – patience.

Ok this recipe will make my home-style curry for 2 people.

Ingredients for the sauce

- 4 table spoons of oil
- 1 large onion, chopped into strips
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1/4 inch piece of ginger, finely chopped
- 3/4 teaspoon coriander powder
- 3/4 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1/4 teaspoon garam masala powder
- 1/4 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1/4 teaspoon paprika powder
- 1 tin chopped tomatoes
- salt
- chopped coriander (garnish)

As I said, you can make this curry with chicken, lamb, fish or vegetables so here are my measures for each.

- Chicken Curry – 450g chicken
- Lamb Curry – 300g stewing lamb
- Fish Curry – 2 fillets of fish
- Vegetable Curry – 225 g mixed veg – I like cauliflower.

Step by step

Heat the oil in a large heavy based pan and add the onion. You want to sauté this gently for about 20 – 25 mins to get the onions really soft and deep brown. This is important, you really need to keep the heat to medium and take your time.

Once you are happy with the onions, add the garlic and ginger and fry for 1 minute, then add the coriander powder and keep stirring for a further minute.

Next you can add the turmeric, garam masala and paprika. Again keep this moving in the pan so that the spices fry off but don't burn, fry for 30 seconds.

Now add 200ml of water give it a good stir and let this simmer for 10 minutes. Then add your tomatoes and give it a further simmer for 10 minutes.

This is your basic curry sauce ready, just season to taste.

Now you can add the meat or veg of your choice.

- chicken – add 300ml of water
- lamb – add 500ml of water
- fish – add 200ml of water, or
- vegetables – add 400ml of water
- and simmer until the meat or veg is cooked – stirring frequently.

Serve with rice or flat breads.