

Venison Curry

By Tom Dickson | Preparation time: 30 minutes | Cooking time: 30 minutes to 2 hours | Serves 6



INGREDIENTS

2–4 T. vegetable oil
 2 lbs. venison stew meat (from the neck, shanks, or shoulder) or beef chuck, cut into 1-inch cubes, patted dry with paper towels, and liberally seasoned with salt and pepper
 2 large onions, chopped
 ½ c. curry powder
 2 T. mustard seed
 2 large garlic cloves, minced or crushed
 1 t. ground turmeric
 2 large cinnamon sticks
 6 whole cloves
 1 bay leaf
 1 (28 oz.) can chopped tomatoes
 2 c. beef broth
 2 T. minced jalapeño peppers
 2 T. minced fresh ginger
 1 (14.5 oz.) can garbanzo beans, drained
 Optional: 1 ½ c. whole milk, ½ c. chopped peanuts, ¼ c. shredded coconut
 Cooked white rice

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 300*.

In a large Dutch oven or other oven-safe pot, heat vegetable oil and brown meat in batches. Remove meat.

Brown onions for 7 minutes. Return meat to pot.

Add curry, mustard seed, garlic, turmeric, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and bay leaf.

Cook while stirring for 1 minute.

Add tomatoes, broth, peppers, and ginger. Bring to a boil. Place in oven and bake for 2 hours*.

Remove from oven. Stir in beans and (if using) milk. Serve over cooked white rice, with (if using) coconut and chopped peanuts sprinkled on top. ■

**If using venison roast or steak meat, increase temperature to 375 degrees and cook for only 30 minutes.*

When I first began dating my future wife, we spent a lot of time hanging out at her parents' home. Her father, a doctor who immigrated to the United States from Burma (Myanmar) in the late 1950s, had recently retired. For recreation, he liked to cook Burmese cuisine, which is influenced by Chinese, Indian, and Thai dishes. On Saturday nights after Lisa and I returned to her parents' home from a movie or concert, we'd be hit with the welcoming aroma of cinnamon, coriander, ginger, turmeric, cloves, and more from dishes like biryani or beef curry. A big bowl would be left out for the two of us.

After we moved to Montana, I set out to re-create that scrumptious curry, using venison rather than beef. I experimented but could never quite capture the taste of what I remembered. Finally I hit upon the right mix of ingredients that transported me back to that aromatic kitchen.

The ingredients list is long, but don't be deterred. All items are available in most Montana grocery stores. And the cooking process is easy: Brown the meat and onions, add everything else, then stick the pot into the oven for a few hours. Pay bills or watch TV while it cooks.

This recipe is a great way to use venison neck meat, shanks, and the sinewy portions of the shoulder. These cuts contain collagen and connective tissue that break down and make the meat fork-tender during the slow, moist, low-heat cooking process known as braising. If using beef, the best cut is a chuck roast.

If all you have in the freezer are venison steaks and roasts—which usually come from the hindquarters—you can still make this dish. Simply cook it hotter and faster. It won't be as good as with a slow braise, but it will still be delicious. 🐾

—Tom Dickson is editor of Montana Outdoors.