

Spicy Coconut Mussels With Lemongrass

By Melissa Clark

YIELD 2 servings

TIME 20 minutes

Mussels are cheap, delicious and relatively fun to eat: saline, mild and plump little bites. They are also extremely easy to cook, especially if they've been farmed (most mussels you find in markets have been). Just give them a good rinse, and they are ready to go. Here the treatment heads in the general direction of Thailand, offering a sauce of coconut milk, lemongrass, garlic and chiles that perfectly frames the sweetness of the meat.

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons coconut or safflower oil
1 shallot, finely chopped
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1 stalk lemongrass, trimmed (outer layers removed) and finely chopped
½ to 1 small hot chile (like Thai bird, Serrano, Scotch bonnet or jalapeño), seeded and finely chopped
1 cup unsweetened coconut milk
2 pounds fresh mussels, rinsed well
Zest of 1/2 lemon
1 teaspoon lemon juice, or to taste
½ teaspoon Asian fish sauce, or to taste
½ cup whole cilantro leaves
1 or 2 croissants, split in half.

PREPARATION

Step 1

Heat the oil in the bottom of a large pot until hot. Add the shallot, garlic, lemongrass and chile. Cook over medium heat until soft, about 3 minutes. Add the coconut milk and mussels. Cover with a tight-fitting lid and cook until the mussels have opened, 5 to 7 minutes (discard any mussels that remained closed). Remove from heat, and use a slotted spoon to transfer the mussels to a large bowl, leaving the liquid in the pot. Stir the lemon zest and juice, fish sauce and cilantro into the pot. Taste and add more fish sauce and/or lemon juice if needed (fish sauce provides the salt).

Step 2

As the mussels cook, heat the broiler. Place the croissants, cut side up, on a small baking sheet. Run under the broiler until just golden. Put the mussels in two wide, shallow bowls. Ladle the broth over them and serve with the croissants.

PRIVATE NOTES

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