WILL MEYRICK

SINGAPORE / SINGAPORE STREET FOOD

CURRY CHICKEN BEE HOON MEE

Curry chicken bee hoon mee is a Singapore noodle soup: poached chicken, potato and fried tofu over rice vermicelli and yellow noodles, in a coconut curry broth that is spicy and creamy, or lemak.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	40 min	1 h	1 h 40 min	Medium	Hot

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE CHICKEN AND STOCK

1 small chicken (about 1.2 kg)

2 l water

30 g ginger, sliced

3 spring onions

2 tsp salt

FOR THE CURRY PASTE

12 dried red chillies, soaked

8 shallots

5 garlic cloves

2 lemongrass stalks, white part only

20 g galangal

20 g fresh turmeric (or 1 tsp ground)

4 candlenuts

1 tbsp toasted shrimp paste (belacan)

FOR THE CURRY

5 tbsp neutral oil

3 tbsp Malay curry powder (meat)

2 stems curry leaves

400 ml coconut milk

2 potatoes, peeled and cut into chunks

12 fried tofu puffs, or 200 g fried firm tofu, sliced

1 tbsp fish sauce

1 tsp sugar

FOR THE BOWLS

200 g thick rice vermicelli (bee hoon)

300 g fresh yellow noodles

150 g bean sprouts

Chilli oil or sambal, to serve

METHOD

POACH THE CHICKEN

1. Bring the water to the boil with the ginger, spring onions and salt. Lower in the chicken, bring back to a bare simmer and cook for 25 minutes. Cover and leave off the heat for 20 minutes.
2. Lift the chicken into iced water for 10 minutes, drain and cut or pull into pieces. Keep the stock.

MAKE THE CURRY

3. Blend the paste ingredients. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat and fry the paste with the curry leaves for 8 to 10 minutes, until dark and the oil separates. Stir in the curry powder with a splash of water and cook for 2 minutes.
4. Pour in 1.2 l of the stock, add the potatoes and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the tofu, coconut milk, fish sauce and sugar and simmer gently for 8 minutes, until the potatoes are soft.

BUILD THE BOWLS

5. Blanch the noodles and bean sprouts and divide between bowls. Top with the chicken, potato and tofu and ladle over the hot broth.
6. Serve with a little chilli oil.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Poaching the chicken on its own keeps it juicy. Do not boil it in the curry.

The curry is better after an hour's rest. Reheat it gently so the coconut milk does not split.

A squeeze of calamansi at the table lifts the richness.

Ah Heng at Hong Lim Food Centre in Chinatown has been doing bowl after bowl of hot curry chicken mee since the 60s, and has a Bib Gourmand for it. It is Will's first meal of the day.The chicken is cooked almost the Hainanese way, not braised in the curry, so it stays super juicy. Then there are big slices...