



Venison or Tahr Rendang

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My old hunting mate who is a bit of a trickster said he wanted me to do a recipe for burgoo stew.

I hadn't heard of this so I looked it up and found it wasn't a trick. A traditional burgoo was made using whatever combination of meats was available such as venison and squirrel, possum, raccoon and game birds, and it was often associated with autumn and the harvest season. Hmm – sounds good to me – yeah right!

So let's go to something that's popular and generally sits in the top five for takeaways in NZ (top two in the UK) and also because it's the middle of winter – what could be better than a good curry? One of the Asian chefs here makes a sensational rendang curry. Rendang has Indonesian origins (my chef doesn't though) and is described as a rich, tender coconut stew which is flavourful and will win you over for taste, so I prised his recipe out of him, although it was actually his wife who wrote it out for me. I tried making it with tahr and also with venison and it worked just as well as the traditional beef one – even his wife was impressed when I sent some home with my chef to try.



Ingredients

- » 600g diced venison or tahr back leg meat, trimmed of sinew
- » Cooking oil
- » 1½ cinnamon sticks
- » 6 whole cloves
- » 4 star anise
- » 6 cardamom pods
- » 1 stick of lemongrass, just the white part
- » 1 tin coconut milk (or coconut cream if you wish the sauce to be thicker and richer)
- » 1 cup water or chicken stock
- » 50ml/2 Tb of tamarind juice (easily found in Asian supermarkets)
- » 3 kaffir lime leaves
- » ½ cup toasted coconut
- » 1 Tb palm sugar or brown sugar

FOR SPICE PASTE

- » 1 onion or 5 shallots
- » 1 piece of galangal (this is generally found in the freezer of Asian supermarkets)
- » 3 sticks lemongrass, just the white parts
- » 6 cloves garlic
- » 1 knob of ginger
- » 4-6 dried chillies (presoak in warm water) or 5 fresh chillies (if you like it hot, add more

Method

Cut the white parts of the three sticks of lemongrass into small pieces and bash with the back of a knife; this releases more flavour.

Blend along with the other spice paste ingredients in a blender/food processor until smooth.

Heat a pan and put the following spices in it: cinnamon sticks, whole cloves, star anise and cardamom pods.

Lightly toast them to release the aromas and then add the spice paste and cook for approximately 2 minutes.

Add the meat and the single lemongrass stick and stir for about 2 minutes to ensure all the meat is mixed and coated well.

Add the coconut milk, kaffir lime leaves,

tamarind juice, water or stock, and simmer on a low heat until the meat is tender. You could also cook this in a slow cooker on low if you prefer. The cooking time will be determined by the cut of meat you are using so you may need to add more stock and coconut milk if the liquid decreases too much over time.

Add toasted coconut and palm sugar, stir well and season to taste, then continue to cook for 20-30 minutes more so the meat is really tender and almost falling apart.

Check the seasoning again and add more salt, palm sugar and/or more chilli if desired. Serve with steamed rice and garnish with fresh coriander.

The less common ingredients that probably aren't in your pantry at home can be found in most Asian warehouses. Remember that recipes are only guidelines so if you don't like something, you can swap it out or use less of the hot ingredients such as the chilli in this recipe.