Gujarati sweet potato curry

With vibrant colour, full depth of flavour and a spicy kick, this Beautifully Simple Gujarati sweet potato curry makes a perfect weekend supper.

Serves 2
Prep: 10 minutes
Cook: 30-35 minutes

Cooks’ Ingredients
organic coconut
½ tbsp
2 peppers from a pack of sweet peppers (yellow and red), cut into chunks
1 onion, roughly chopped
1 sweet potato, scrubbed and cut into 2cm chunks

Cooks’ Ingredients
Gujarati paste 75g
organic coconut milk or reduced fat coconut milk 400ml can
pack coriander, chopped ½ x 28g
Flaked almonds 20g toasted

Heat the oil in a large frying pan or wide, shallow saucepan and gently fry the peppers and onions for 8-10 minutes, stirring frequently until softened and lightly browned.

Add the sweet potato chunks, stir in the curry paste and coconut milk, and bring to a simmer. Cover with a lid and cook for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally until the vegetables are very soft and beginning to break up.

Season to taste and stir in half the coriander, with a splash of water if needed. Scatter with the almonds and remaining coriander. Serve with pilau rice or warmed naan breads.

Per serving: 1505kJ/362kcals/25g fat/18g saturated fat/27g carbohydrate/12g sugars/6.3g fibre/4.6g protein/0.4g salt/Vegetarian

Listen to Alexander on the Classic FM podcast at campaign.classicfm.com/classical-kitchen. For more about the magic of music and food visit theguardian.com/beautifully-simple
What kind of home cook are you?
I do absolutely love cooking. Years ago I did a course and it was really useful - learning things such as how to make a roux or knowing how to thicken something. I’m quite well-versed in the basics now.

What ingredient do you love to cook with?
I have a thing about cooked peppers. The texture is quite naughty; slimy in a way that’s pleasing – especially charred on a barbecue.

Complete the sentence: ‘Music and food are the perfect match because …’
They’re the two most potent depositories for our memories. Nothing whisks you back to a certain time like taste and music.

What classical music do you play when you’re cooking?
I usually put on some Verdi, but I’m currently rediscovering Richard Strauss Die Frau ohne Schatten.

What music always makes food taste better? I like jazz - it’s cool and groovy and has a New York vibe. You think Woody Allen and Frank O’Hara are about to pitch up.

What three songs would you always put on a dinner party playlist - starter, main course and dessert? Death with Dignity by Sufjan Stevens for a starter, followed by David Byrne’s Independence Day for the main. For pudding: Indian by Eg and Alice.

What piece of music reminds you of a particularly amazing meal?
In Verona there’s a huge Roman arena and they put on operas - we went to see Aida. There must have been 10,000 people there and a cast of 300. Beforehand, we had linguine alle vongole in a cheap and cheerful pasta place - a great pairing.

What would be your desert island meal?
Grouse, served up alongside red cabbage, fondant potatoes and wilted greens.

What’s your signature dish?
I do pasta with fresh sauces – I enjoy making a good tomato and carrot reduction, or a red pepper sauce with smoked paprika and anchovies.

‘I have a thing about cooked peppers - the texture is quite naughty’

For the Classic FM podcast you cooked Beautifully Simple Gujarati sweet potato curry (see recipe over page) - what did you like about it? Normally, when I’m making a curry, the real pleasure for me is roasting the aromatic spices and grinding the paste myself, but this pre-made mix tasted as good as anything you’d make yourself. I liked the fact it had lots of colour, too.

Will you be making it at home? Yes, it has a lovely broad texture and taste and it’s not too spicy, so the kids would enjoy it. I liked that you could taste the coconut milk - often it’s mixed with tomatoes and you can’t.

Want to cook like Alexander? Follow the recipe over the page

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What I love about music and food

As she prepares a Beautifully Simple recipe from Waitrose & Partners, Classic FM host Myleene Klass talks kitchen influences and her dream dinner-party playlist.

What kind of home cook are you?
When it comes to my working life, I’m good at knowing what’s missing and ad-libbing with a musical piece. But when it comes to cooking, I’m a scientist and follow every single instruction and ingredient.

On the Classic FM podcast, you cooked Beautifully Simple steak with walnuts and a ponzu sauce (see recipe over the page) – what did you like about it?
It was simple and fast to make. I really enjoyed the surprise element – you’d typically find spring onions, steak and cabbage in lots of Asian dishes, but normally the beef would be sliced in a stir-fry, and this was served in a more European style.

Will you be making it at home?
Yes, I’ll definitely cook it with my children – it tasted incredible.

What classical musical do you play when you’re cooking?
Rachmaninoff’s Piano Concerto No 2 is perfect.

What piece of music reminds you of a particularly amazing meal?
I love those evenings when I have my girlfriends over and I’ll play opera, usually La Boheme – I love anything by Puccini.

What’s your signature dish?
Because I grew up around it, I’m most confident making Asian dishes – I make turon (fried banana rolls) with the children, along with spring rolls and fried rice. As my dad’s from Austria, I make a mean strudel.

‘I’m most confident with Asian dishes, but I also make a mean strudel’

Complete the sentence: ‘Music and food are the perfect match because ...’
Both of them feed the soul, and the other thing they have in common is that global element – influences from all around the world make them both so great.

What’s your desert island meal?
Grilled lobster with garlic and butter. Then my mum’s egg fried rice. I’d love a Sunday roast, too - with chicken - followed by apple pie and custard.

What three songs would you always put on a dinner-party playlist – starter, main and dessert?
Faure’s Pavane for a starter; For the Love of a Princess by James Horner for the main; and Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde act 3 for dessert.

If your favourite song was a meal, what would that be?
Ralph Vaughan Williams’s Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis is one of the most beautiful pieces ever written. It would be something smooth like a seafood bisque or maybe a pea, ham and mint soup.
Steak with walnuts and a ponzu sauce

This Beautifully Simple recipe for steak with walnuts and a ponzu sauce takes its cues from Japanese fusion cuisine for a delicious, no-fuss dinner.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/390°F/gas mark 6. Lightly season the steaks on both sides. Heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a frying pan. Once very hot, sear the beef briefly on one side for 2 minutes. Turn the steaks and fry for a further minute. Transfer to a roasting tin.

Heat the remaining oil in the pan and fry the walnuts and salad onions for 1 minute, then add the garlic and basil and cook for a further minute. Season with freshly ground black pepper and spoon on to the beef, packing the topping down gently. Bake for 5 minutes in the oven. Lift the meat from the tin and keep warm.

Add the finishing jus to the roasting tin and cook on the hob for 2 to 3 minutes, or until reduced by about half and slightly thickened. Stir in the ponzu sauce and spoon over the steaks to serve. Accompany with seasonal vegetables.

Per serving: 2684kJ/645kcal/45g fat/6.9g saturated fat/6.5g carbohydrate/5.2g sugars/4.7g fibre/52g protein/1g salt

Serves: 2
Prep: 10 minutes
Cook: 15 minutes

Aberdeen Angus beef frying steak
300g pack, or Aberdeen Angus sirloin steak, 2 x 150g packs
Walnut oil or vegetable oil
2 tbsp
Walnuts, 75g, finely chopped
Trimmed salad onions, 1 bunch, finely chopped
Cooks’ Ingredients
garlic, 3 cloves, crushed
Cooks’ Ingredients
Thai basil, ½ x 25g pack, chopped
Cooks’ Ingredients
Heston Finishing Jus for Beef
200g pack
Cooks’ Ingredients
Ponzu sauce
3 tbsp

Listen to Myleene as she cooks on the Classic FM podcast at campaign.
classicfm.com/classical-kitchen. For more about the magic of music and food visit theguardian.com/beautifully-simple.

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