



**COMFORTING CURRY.** A serving of Thai Red Curry with Lentils and Tofu is seen in Brookline, Massachusetts. The recipe appears in the cookbook *Nutritious Delicious*. (Daniel J. van Ackere/America's Test Kitchen via AP)

## A Thai-style red curry that highlights lentils and tofu

By America's Test Kitchen

Thai curries embrace a delicate balance of flavors, textures, temperatures, and colors to produce lively, satisfying meals. Though fresh tasting (thanks to potent herbs and aromatics), restaurant renditions can be high in saturated fat due to hefty amounts of coconut milk, especially when made with red meat.

We wanted to create a Thai-style red curry that wasn't swimming in coconut milk and featured fiber-rich lentils and tofu instead. We started by cooking the lentils in an aromatic red curry broth.

When the lentils were tender but still slightly al dente and had absorbed most of the liquid, we incorporated a bit of coconut

milk to create a rich, fragrant sauce.

To contrast the nutty earthiness of the lentils, we added vibrant red bell pepper slices, snow peas, and cubes of tofu at the very end, simply warming them through to maintain the color and crisp-fresh texture of the vegetables.

A generous handful of fresh basil and a sprinkle of scallions gave the dish a brisk, heady finish. Lentilles du Puy, also called French green lentils, are our first choice, but brown, black, or regular green lentils are fine, too (cooking times will vary). Do not use light coconut milk. You will need a 12" skillet with a tight-fitting lid.

America's Test Kitchen provided this article to The Associated Press. More recipes, cooking tips, and ingredient and product reviews are available at <[www.americastestkitchen.com](http://www.americastestkitchen.com)>.

### Thai Red Curry with Lentils and Tofu

Servings: 4

Start to finish: 1 hour

- 14 ounces extra-firm tofu, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon expeller-pressed canola oil
- 1 tablespoon Thai red curry paste
- 2 1/2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce
- 1 cup French green lentils, picked over and rinsed
- 1/2 cup canned coconut milk
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed, seeded, and cut into 1/4-inch strips
- 4 ounces snow peas, strings removed and halved crosswise
- 1/2 cup coarsely chopped fresh basil
- 1 tablespoon lime juice
- 2 scallions, sliced thin

Spread tofu on paper towel-lined baking sheet and let drain for 20 minutes. Gently press dry with paper towels and season with salt and pepper.

Heat oil in 12" skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Add curry paste and cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about one minute. Stir in water, fish sauce, and lentils and bring to simmer. Cover, reduce heat to low, and simmer gently, stirring occasionally, until lentils are tender and about two-thirds of liquid has been absorbed, 30 to 35 minutes.

Stir in coconut milk until well combined. Add tofu, bell pepper, and snow peas, and increase heat to medium-high. Cover and cook, stirring occasionally, until tofu is warmed through and vegetables are crisp-tender, about two minutes.

Off heat, stir in basil and lime juice. Season with salt to taste and sprinkle with scallions. Serve.

Nutrition information per serving: 375 calories (142 calories from fat); 16 g fat (6 g saturated, 0 g trans fats); 0 mg cholesterol; 1,269 mg sodium; 38 g carbohydrate; 11 g fiber; 5 g sugar; 23 g protein.

## You can freeze that? Tips for freezing all kinds of foods

By Katie Workman

The Associated Press

**D**o you think of your freezer as an extension of your pantry? You should.

Yes, we know the freezer is a marvellous holding pen for emergency frozen dinners, packaged frozen vegetables, and ice cream. But it also can store a wide range of spare ingredients to have at the ready. Many foods that are not obvious candidates for freezing can be stored there in excellent condition. Freezing food is also a great way to reduce food waste, a big issue both in our country and our kitchens.

First, some general tips for freezing food:

Use freezer-proof, plastic, zipper-top bags, or glass or plastic containers, and just continue to reuse and recycle them. I have some containers I've been using for so long they're on the cusp of becoming vintage!

The freezer-proof plastic bags should be labelled "freezer"; they are thicker and sturdier than regular storage bags. When using them, press out any excess air. The more air you remove, the better the food preservation. If you happen to have one of those vacuum-sealer machines, have at it; if not, press down on the bag to push out the air before you seal it up tightly.

If you are freezing items in containers, leave about 1/2" headroom at the top because some foods, especially liquids, expand slightly when frozen. This way, the food will fill the container as it freezes, but not pop off the lid.

Label each bag or container with the name of the food and the date you put it in the freezer. Use permanent marker, and if you are using a reusable container, make a label with masking tape so you can peel it off and put a new one on next time. We all think we'll remember, but puréed raspberries can look a lot like tomato paste when they surface in the back of the freezer.

Now, for some good and perhaps surprising items you can freeze:

### Shredded cheese

If you buy bulk bags of cheese, divide them into smaller, freezer-safe bags. Hard cheese can be frozen in chunks, but shredded freezes best. You can even use the cheese directly from the freezer, as it defrosts very quickly.

### Homemade pancakes or waffles

Don't throw out those breakfast leftovers! Freeze them first on a baking sheet in a single layer, then wrap them in plastic wrap with a layer of wax or parchment paper in between each, slip them into freezer-proof, zipper-top bags, and freeze. You can defrost and heat the pancakes or waffles in the microwave.

### Fresh herbs

Roughly chop any fresh herb and put about one tablespoon of it in each container of an ice cube tray. Then fill up the sections with a little broth, water or olive oil, and freeze. Once the herby ice cubes are frozen, transfer them to a bag, seal well, label, and pop them back into the freezer. Defrost before using, unless you are throwing one into a soup or stew. They will not be able to be used as a garnish, as their texture will be affected, but they are great in dressings, marinades, and such.

### Tomato paste

This is one of my favorites. When a recipe calls for one tablespoon of tomato paste, don't cover the rest of the can with foil and shove it into the back of the fridge. Scrape it into a freezer-proof bag, press out the air, and freeze. Snap off pieces as you need it; just guesstimate what a tablespoon would be, and usually you can just add it frozen to a recipe. Most recipes calling for tomato paste involve heating it,



**FREEZABLE FOODS.** A variety of foods are surprisingly freezable. From left are bananas, fresh oregano, cooked quinoa in a glass bowl, ginger, tomato paste, orange peel, and mounds of whipped cream. (Cheyenne M. Cohen/Katie Workman via AP)

and it will melt and blend in quickly.

### Cooked grains

Not only is this a great way to save leftover rice, quinoa, faro, and so on, it's a smart way to meal plan. Make extra grains when you make a batch for dinner, and then freeze them in small containers or bags. When you are ready to use them, defrost them in the fridge, or if you are adding them to a dish, you can add them still frozen.

### Whole fruit

Bananas freeze up beautifully right in their own skins — no plastic required! Defrost, peel, and use them in baked goods like banana bread. Thawed or frozen, they are great in smoothies. You can also freeze whole tomatoes or peaches with their skins still on; wash, dry, and core or pit them, then freeze. When you thaw them, even partially, you can slip their skins right off. The tomatoes can then be chopped and used in sauces and other cooked dishes. The peaches are good in baked goods and smoothies. Some people skip the coring and the bags, and just freeze the fruit loose with skins intact.

### Bread

You can double-wrap bread in foil and then slide it into a freezer-proof bag. This is a great way to save half a baguette or another nice bakery loaf. Thaw it on the counter for several hours, or in the oven — how long depends on the size of the loaf. Packaged sliced bread can stay in its bag. Pull out slices as you need them; they will defrost quickly.

### Fresh ginger

You can freeze whole knobs of ginger, peeled or unpeeled, in freezer-proof bags. Then grate it directly from the freezer. Once grated, it will soften quickly.

### Citrus rinds/zest

Many recipes call for just the juice of a lemon, lime, or orange, but the rinds have lovely flavor locked up in their oils. Before you juice the fruit, either use a vegetable peeler to remove strips of the zest (the brightly colored outer part of the peel) or grate the zest. Store it in tiny containers. You can use zest to brighten the flavor of stews, soups, marinades, dressings, sauces, etc. Remove bigger pieces of rind before serving.

### Whipped cream

This is a cute one. If you have leftover whipped cream or a can that is nearing its expiration date, scoop or spray fat dollops of whipped cream onto a small tray or plate. Place it in the freezer and, when solid, transfer the whipped cream to a container or freezer-proof bag. Freeze, and then pull out as you wish to float in a mug of hot chocolate.

### Scraps for stock

Another green and economical thing to do is to save your vegetable, poultry, or meat bones and scraps in the freezer. When the container or bag is full, it's time to make homemade stock!



**Celebrate the  
Year of the Pig!**

February 5, 2019 to  
January 24, 2020

Find us on  
**Facebook**