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indonesian monkfish and mussel curry

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This is one of my favourite things to make for a special dinner, ideal for Valentine's Day. At least we can still cook super-delicious things for those in our bubble.

Serves 8 (as a main course)

For the curry paste:

- 4 garlic cloves
- ¼ tsp shrimp paste
- 2 red chillies
- 3 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 lemongrass stalk, outer leaves removed, sliced
- 4 spring onions
- 2 plum tomatoes
- 2 tsp dry-fried coriander seeds
- 2 tsp dry-fried fennel seeds
- ½ grated nutmeg
- 1 thumb-length piece of fresh root ginger, peeled
- 4g fresh galangal, peeled (or use more ginger if you can't find)
- 3 tbsp coconut palm sugar

Main ingredients:

- 2 medium-sized sweet potatoes, cut into 2cm slices
- 2 medium aubergines, cut into 3cm cubes
- 1 tbsp cold-pressed rapeseed oil
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 600g cleaned monkfish tail, cut into 4cm cubes
- 4 tbsp curry paste (see above)
- 12 raw prawns, peeled and de-veined
- 20 or so mussels (in their shells), cleaned and de-bearded
- 250ml fish stock (made from a stock cube)
- 2 x 400ml tins of coconut milk
- 4 star anise
- 4 kaffir lime leaves, fresh or dried
- 1 tsp tamarind paste
- 12 cherry tomatoes, cut in half
- 100g chard, stalks finely sliced and leaves torn
- Thai fish sauce to serve

First make the curry paste – it's good to make this on decent-sized batches as it stores for ages in the fridge and you can then use it to make lots of delicious vegetable, fish or chicken curries over the next month or



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two. I keep mine in a jar in the fridge and turn to it for something once a week or so.

Roughly chop all the curry paste ingredients and blitz in a food processor, then fry in 1 tbsp cold-pressed rapeseed oil.

Cook it for 2 mins and pour in coconut milk. Add the star anise, lime leaves and tamarind paste – simmer for 5-10 mins.

Meanwhile preheat the oven to 180°C and roast the cubed aubergine and sweet potato on a baking tray, drizzled with a little oil, salt and pepper. Roast for about 30 mins until both veg are soft and starting to colour.

Cube the monkfish. You can double the quantities here to make this more luxurious but monkfish is expensive. I often use pollock instead. It's more sustainable and a fraction of the price and works well.

Steam the mussels till they open, 2-3 mins. And brown the fish, flash-frying it briefly in a little oil on both sides.

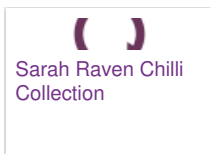
Add all the ingredients apart from the fish and stir to combine.

Add the prawns, and monkfish and cook for 5 minutes on a low heat, trying not to stir.

Add the chard, and finally the mussels to heat through for 3-4 minutes.

Serve with black or red rice, a dash of fish sauce and maybe some fresh coriander

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