



Creamy coconut milk and peppers mix beautifully in this aromatic seafood stew. The tile-topped cocktail table is by Bunny Williams Home. For details, see Resources.

BRAZILIAN BOUNTY

Bring a touch of the tropics to your winter table with this colorful and aromatic Bahian seafood stew. BY DANIEL BOULUD

My friend Vik Muniz is a Brazilian artist whose work at times incorporates food. He made a big portrait of me using sugar and chocolate, which hangs in my home, and a series of framed photographs of wine-stained napkins, which line the walls of Bar Boulud. A couple of

years ago, I was asked to cook a candlelit dinner in Vik's honor for 650 guests at New York's Cathedral of Saint John the Divine. Vik and I have shared many Brazilian meals together over the years, and I knew right away what to prepare for the party: *moqueca*, a delicious seafood ▷

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FOOD PREPARATION BY MARY KIRK GOELDNER

stew (my version comes from the northeastern state of Bahia). Over the course of the evening, several Brazilian guests remarked that my recipe perfectly re-created the delicious *moquecas* they remembered from home.

I've made various fish stews over the years: cioppino, the hearty San Francisco fisherman's soup; Korea's *jjigae*, which I make with spicy kimchi; and the traditional French bouillabaisse and bourride that I grew up with. But to me, nothing compares to *moqueca*, which I first tasted on a trip to Brazil two decades ago. The ingredients evoke the tropical beachside culture, with fresh fish and shellfish, tomatoes, tangy chiles, creamy coconut milk, and dendê oil, a bright-red Brazilian cooking oil made from the fruit of the African palm tree. It adds a rich, carrotty flavor and can be found at specialty stores and online.

Served over rice flavored with cashews and toasted coconut, two of Brazil's staple foods, *moqueca* is easy to make and ideal for an exotic and hearty winter brunch. The recipe can be expanded by increasing the proportions in equal measure and is guaranteed to please your guests, whether you're cooking for six or 650. *Obrigado e bom apetite*—thanks and bon appétit.



Peppers, tomatoes, and lime add intense flavor to seafood; the cement tiles are by Clé. For details, see Resources.



WHAT TO DRINK

"I choose two distinct styles of Chardonnay to pair with this stew," says Raj Vaidya, head sommelier of Daniel restaurant. "The first is a lean and crisp example from the Muscadet area of the Loire Valley, Eric Chevalier's *Domaine de l'Aujardière Chardonnay 2014* [S17]. It has a touch of richness to pair well with the monkfish, yet its beautiful herbaceous and floral notes complement the cilantro. A richer and fuller option that still maintains great freshness and acidity is *Wenzlau Vineyard's Chardonnay 2013* [S36] from the Santa Rita Hills in California. It's a bright wine from a cool part of the state that has the richness to match the palm oil and fish, and the fruit and acidity to bridge the gap between the coconut and the zestiness of the lime."

MOQUECA WITH CASHEW RICE

Serves 6

For the moqueca

- 1/2 lb. shrimp, shelled
- 1 1/2 lbs. monkfish fillet, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1/2 lb. squid, cleaned and rinsed; body cut into 1/2-inch rings
- 5 T dendê oil (also called palm oil), plus extra for garnish
- One 1-inch piece ginger, grated
- 6 garlic cloves—2 grated, 4 minced
- 1 small Fresno chile, thinly sliced
- 1 bunch cilantro—stems reserved, leaves roughly chopped
- 3 T butter
- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 4 bell peppers, seeded and cut into 1/2-inch-wide strips
- Salt and ground white pepper
- 1/4 cup white wine vinegar
- 3 T flour
- Three 5 oz. cans unsweetened coconut milk
- 2 large beefsteak tomatoes—peeled, seeded, and roughly chopped
- Three 5-inch stalks of heart of palm, thinly sliced
- 2 limes—1 juiced, 1 cut into 6 wedges for garnish

Combine the shrimp, monkfish, squid, dendê oil, ginger, grated garlic, Fresno chile, and half of the chopped cilantro leaves in a shallow dish and mix gently until the seafood is well coated. Marinate for 30 minutes, or overnight. In a 5-quart braising pan, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion and sauté for 5 minutes, then add the minced garlic and bell peppers. Season with salt and white pepper. Cook for 10 minutes,

add the vinegar, and continue cooking until it is reduced and the pan is nearly dry. Add the flour and cook for 5 minutes. Add the coconut milk and tomatoes and bring to a simmer; season with salt. Tie the cilantro stems together with butcher's twine and add to the stew. Cover and simmer for 10 minutes. Add the marinated seafood, stir, and reduce the heat to very low. Cover and cook for 20 minutes, until the seafood is gently poached; the monkfish should be firm and opaque. Remove the cilantro stems. Add the hearts of palm and lime juice, and taste for seasoning. Serve over cashew rice (recipe below), garnished with the reserved chopped cilantro and lime wedges.

For the cashew rice

- 1 cup basmati rice
- 1 1/2 cups water
- Salt
- 2 T olive oil
- 3/4 cup roughly chopped unsalted cashews
- Ground white pepper
- 3/4 cup toasted coconut flakes

Rinse the rice several times until the water is clear, then drain in a sieve. In a 2-quart saucepan, bring rice, water, and 1 teaspoon salt to a boil. Reduce heat to low and cook, covered, until rice is tender and water is absorbed, 15 minutes. Fluff with a fork. Set aside.

In a large pot, heat the olive oil over medium-high heat. Add the cashews and cook, stirring, until toasted and fragrant. Add the cooked rice and stir to combine. Season with salt and white pepper, if needed. Transfer to a serving bowl and sprinkle with toasted coconut. Serve hot. ■