Thai-Style Chicken Satay with Sweet Pepper Sauce

Adapted from "Asian Grilling" by Su-Mei Yu (HarperCollins, $24.95).

INGREDIENTS:

Marinade

- ☐ 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- ☐ ½ teaspoon cumin seeds
- ☐ ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ☐ 5 garlic cloves, minced
- ☐ 1 tablespoon minced galangal or ginger
- ☐ 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ☐ ½ teaspoon turmeric powder
- ☐ ½ cup combined coconut cream and whole milk (to consistency of whole milk)

Sauce

- ☐ 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ☐ 1 garlic clove, minced
- ☐ ½ cup sugar
- ☐ ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ☐ ¾ cup cider or white vinegar
- ☐ 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- ☐ 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Satay

- ☐ 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs
- ☐ 10 to 12 bamboo skewers, soaked in water for 30 minutes, then dried
- ☐ Vegetable oil spray

INSTRUCTIONS: For the marinade: Put coriander seeds in a small skillet. Dry-roast over medium-high heat, sliding skillet back and forth over burner to prevent burning, until seeds exude a pleasant aroma, about 1 minute. Remove from heat and transfer to a bowl to cool. Repeat with cumin seeds. Grind in a spice grinder and set aside.

Pound salt and garlic in a mortar with a pestle into a paste. Add galangal (or ginger) and pound into a paste. Transfer to a mixing bowl. Add coriander and cumin seeds, cayenne and turmeric. Mix to combine. Add coconut cream mixture and mix well. Set aside. Alternatively, puree ingredients in a blender. Transfer to a bowl and set aside. Stored in a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid, marinade will keep overnight in refrigerator.

For the sauce: Heat oil in a saucepan over high heat for 1 to 2 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until it turns yellow. Add remaining ingredients and stir and cook until sauce boils and sugar is completely dissolved. Boil for 8 minutes until mixture easily coats a spoon. Transfer to a serving bowl and let cool; the sauce will thicken like maple syrup. Or transfer to a glass jar with a tight-fitting lid and store in the refrigerator for up to a month.

For the satay: Slice the chicken diagonally across the grain into thin strips approximately 1/10 inch, or as thin as possible. Add the chicken to the marinade; mix well to coat. Cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Mound charcoal on one side of the grill, leaving the other side empty. Light the coals. Alternatively, heat one side of a gas grill.

While waiting for the grill to get hot, thread 3-4 pieces of the chicken onto each bamboo skewer into a tight bundle, covering about 3 inches of the skewer. Reserve the remaining marinade.

Spray the chicken generously with vegetable oil. Lay the skewers with the chicken portion on the grill over medium-high heat, arranging them very close to one another. (The uncovered portion of the skewers should not be over the coals.) Grill, basting frequently with the marinade and turning frequently to prevent burning, until the surface is crispy and brown and the inside is firm and white, 8-10 minutes. Transfer to a platter and serve.

Yields 10-12 satays

The calories and other nutrients absorbed from marinades vary and are difficult to estimate. Variables include the type of food, marinating time and amount of surface area. Therefore, this recipe contains no analysis.