



ANSON MILLS

Thai Corn Fritters with Sweet Chile Dipping Sauce

Yield

Makes about 22 three-bite fritters and about 1/2 cup dipping sauce

Time

About 1 hour, start to finish

Cooking Remarks

Made of red chiles, lemon grass, shallots, garlic, galangal, makrut lime, and other ingredients swirling about, Thai red chile paste provides the fritters an easy on-ramp to flavor depth. But the product must be super fresh, as in just-cracked. Open jars lose potency over time. If you must find a substitute for red curry paste, use 1 teaspoon curry powder.

Fresh makrut lime leaves not only make these fritters taste *Thai*, but they make all the other flavors sing. Intensely limey and herbal, be advised that their leaves are also so leathery and tough that the center veins must be removed before cutting the leaves into fine threads. Fresh kaffir lime used to be nearly impossible to find. Not anymore, though. Thanks, Amazon. You make us look so good.

A word of caution: Don't let the oil get too hot as you fry. Aim to keep it under about 360 degrees and the burner no higher than medium-high to prevent the corn from popping and the oil from spitting. Use a splatter screen to minimize the mess. A cast-iron skillet is ideal for frying, as it cooks slowly and steadily, thereby allowing you good control over the temperature of the oil.

By the way, a fresh-tasting alternative to the dipping sauce is a simple vinegary-sweet cucumber-shallot relish called *achaat* or *ajaat*. In a small bowl, stir together 1/4 cup distilled white vinegar; 1/4 cup sugar; 2 tablespoons spring or filtered water; 1/4 teaspoon fine sea salt; and 1 fresh Thai chile, seeded and minced, until the sugar dissolves. Stir in 4 ounces seeded and finely chopped thin-skinned cucumber and 1 medium shallot, cut into 1/2-inch dice.

Equipment Mise en Place

To make the dipping sauce, you will need a chef's knife, a small nonreactive saucepan, and a serving bowl (or glass jar for storage).

To make the fritters, you will need a chef's knife, a blender, a large bowl, a medium or large cast-iron skillet, an instant-read thermometer, a splatter screen, a wire rack set in a rimmed sheet pan, and tongs (or cooking chopsticks, if you're so inclined).

Ingredients

for the sweet chile-vinegar sauce

2 large garlic cloves, peeled

3 or 4 fresh Thai chiles

½ teaspoon fine sea salt
½ cup sugar
½ cup distilled white vinegar
½ cup spring or filtered water

for the fritters

3 ears fresh corn, husked
Whole milk, if needed
1 large egg
2 tablespoons Anson Mills Fine Yellow Cornmeal
2 teaspoons Thai red curry paste (see Cooking Remarks)
½ teaspoon fine sea salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons Anson Mills Carolina Gold Rice Flour, plus additional as needed
4 to 6 fresh makrut lime leaves or 2 scallions, green parts only
Peanut oil, for frying

Directions

- 1. Make the sauce:** Using a chef's knife, finely chop the garlic, then push it to the side of the cutting board. Seed and finely chop the chiles, then combine the chiles and garlic on board. Sprinkle with the salt and mince with the knife, occasionally mashing the mixture with the flat of the blade, until reduced to a coarse paste.
- 2.** In a small nonreactive saucepan, combine the garlic-chile paste, the sugar, vinegar, and water. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring to dissolve the sugar. Continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until reduced to scant 2/3 cup. Pour the mixture into a bowl and let cool. The sauce will thicken as it cools. (If making ahead, the sauce can be poured from the saucepan into a clean jar, allowed to cool, then covered and refrigerated for up to 1 week. Bring to room temperature before serving.)
- 3. Make the fritters:** Using a chef's knife cut the kernels off each ear of corn, then use the back of the knife to scrape the cobs to remove the milk. Combined, you should have about 3 cups of kernels and milk; if the cobs yielded little to no milk, add about 1 tablespoon or so of whole milk to the kernels. In a blender, combine ½ cup of the corn kernel–milk mixture, the egg, cornmeal, curry paste, salt, and pepper. Blend on high until well combined and almost smooth, about 30 seconds. Scrape the mixture into a large bowl, then mix in the remaining corn and the rice flour until evenly moistened.
- 4.** If using makrut lime leaves, pull apart the two sections of each leaf. Using a sharp chef's knife, cut along each side of the center vein of each leaf section. Slice each section crosswise as thinly as humanly possible—fine filaments are ideal. You should have about 1½ teaspoons of lightly packed makrut filaments. If using scallion greens, slice them very thinly. Stir the makrut or the scallions into the batter. The batter should be just thick enough to bind together the corn kernels. If it's too thin and some of the kernels break free, stir in more rice flour 1 teaspoon at a time until it has the correct consistency.

5. Set a wire rack in a rimmed baking sheet and line the rack with a double layer of paper toweling; set near the stove. Pour about 1/2 inch of oil into a medium or large cast-iron skillet and heat the oil over medium-high heat until it registers about 330 degrees. Using 2 soup spoons, drop generous tablespoons of the batter into the hot oil and gently tamp down the mound with the back of a spoon to slightly flatten it. Don't crowd the skillet. Cover with a splatter screen and fry until the bottoms are golden brown, about 3 minutes, adjusting the heat as needed to keep the oil at a lively but gentle bubble. Using tongs (or cooking chopsticks, if you have a pair and are comfortable using them), flip each fritter as it's ready and fry until the second sides are rich golden brown, about 3 minutes more. Transfer to the prepared rack to drain, leaving the fritters bumpy side up (the second sides to fry will be flatter and less bumpy with corn). Fry the remaining batter in the same way. If, during frying, a few kernels break free of the batter and are floating in the oil, remove them so they don't scorch.

6. Serve the fritters warm or at room temperature with the dipping sauce.