



WINE ENTHUSIAST®

PAIRINGS

KITCHEN OF CONTRASTS

FOR COMPLEX, SPICY AND HOT SOUTHEAST ASIAN FOOD, THE KEY TO WINE PAIRING IS SIMPLICITY.

BY KAREN...

SPICY BASIL CHICKEN

For the rempah

½ ounce candlenuts
(available in Asian markets), optional
½ cup chopped white onion
(¼ pound)
4 large cloves garlic
½ stalk lemongrass
½ ounce galangal, peeled
1 ounce red Fresno chili pepper

For the chicken and sauce

¼ cup canola oil
¼ cup white wine vinegar
¼ teaspoon ground turmeric
½ tablespoon salt
¼ cup granulated sugar
12 ounces canned, unsweetened coconut milk
5½ ounces red Fresno chili peppers, cut in julienne slices
5½ ounces jalapeño chili peppers, cut in julienne slices
2½ pounds boneless chicken thighs, cut into bite-sized pieces
2 ounces Thai basil
5½ ounces frozen peas and carrots, thawed
5½ ounces shiitake mushrooms, halved
12 ounces canned bamboo shoots, drained

Prepare the rice: Cook the rice according to the package directions. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

Prepare the rempah: Soak the candlenuts in water for 15 minutes or until soft. Drain. With a mortar and pestle or blender, grind the nuts, onion, garlic, lemongrass, galangal and Fresno chili until a paste, or rempah, is formed. Strain out as much liquid as possible. Set aside.

Prepare the chicken and sauce: Heat the oil in a large stockpot set over medium heat. Add the rempah and cook, stirring, for 25 minutes, or until the oil starts to seep out. Add the vinegar, turmeric, salt and sugar, reduce the heat to low and cook for 15 more minutes. Add the coconut milk and cook until the sauce has reduced in volume and can coat the back of a spoon. Add the peppers and chicken and simmer for 25 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through and no longer pink

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Wine Recommendation: Dennis Baughman, regional manager and wine buyer, suggests Kung Fu Girl Riesling from Charles Smith Wines of Washington's Columbia Valley. "It's bursting with Asian pear, white peach and spring flowers," he says. "Apricot, pear, lime, and a pleasant minerality keep the off-dry wine at the perfect level of subtle sweetness. This is a great wine to contrast the spiciness of the Basil Chicken." Various estate Rieslings from Germany would also work well. Look for such producers as Robert Weil, Mönchhof and S.A. Prüm.