

Vietnamese Chicken Curry Pot Pie

BY CHRISTINE HA | @THEBLINDCOOK

Cà ri gà was a seasonal constant in my childhood—cooked by my mom on cooler Houston evenings and later by my grandma and aunts. We ate it by ripping off pieces of warm baguette and dipping them into the aromatic yellow curry until soaked through. Years later, my love for the dish intersected with a teenage obsession with golden, flaky frozen pot pies. Both dishes belong to autumnal weather, sharing the same comfort-food logic: a thick, savory broth with tender chicken, vegetables, and something wonderfully bready to soak it all up.

When I visited Vietnam in 2023 as a culinary envoy for the U.S. Embassy, I merged these two food memories. Rather than cooking a classic traditional dish for a room full of local experts, I poured chicken curry—fragrant with lemongrass, fish sauce, coconut milk, and curry powder—into a pie pan, draped pastry over top, and baked it until golden. The result is a seamless fusion of Vietnamese flavor and American comfort that truly stands on its own.

Excerpt provided from Christine's forthcoming cookbook, *Cooking From Memory*, which will be published by DK Books in April 2027.

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SERVES: 6, makes one 9-inch pie

INGREDIENTS

Chicken Curry Base

2 ½ lbs (1.1 kg) bone-in chicken legs and thighs
2 tbsp yellow Madras curry powder, divided
1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
1 tsp garlic powder
1 tsp onion powder
½ tsp kosher salt
2 tbsp neutral oil, plus more as needed
2 celery stalks, diced medium
1 large yellow onion, diced medium
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 lemongrass stalks, trimmed, peeled of dry outer layers, and smashed
1 quart (960 ml) chicken stock
3 medium carrots, peeled and diced medium
3 medium yellow potatoes, peeled if desired and diced medium
1 can (13.5 oz) coconut milk
¾ cup (180 ml) evaporated milk
¼ cup (60 ml) fish sauce

Pot Pie

2 tbsp unsalted butter
2 tbsp all-purpose flour
⅓ cup (45 g) frozen peas, thawed
1 sheet pie pastry (homemade or store-bought)
2 tsp unsalted butter, melted

INSTRUCTIONS

01 Marinate the chicken

Toss the chicken, 1 tablespoon of the curry powder, the black pepper, garlic powder, onion powder, and salt together in a large bowl until evenly coated. Cover and marinate it in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

02 Make the curry base

Heat 2 tablespoons of oil in a medium stockpot over medium-high heat. Sauté the celery, onion, garlic, and the remaining 1 tablespoon of curry powder until fragrant, about 3 minutes. Add the chicken and stir-fry until browned, adding a splash of oil if the chicken begins to stick or burn, 5 to 8 minutes. Add the lemongrass, chicken stock, and enough water as needed to cover the ingredients by 1 inch (2.5 cm). Bring it to a boil, then reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through and a thermometer inserted into the thickest part of a thigh reads 165°F (74°C). Transfer the chicken and lemongrass to a platter and set aside. Let the broth cool for 10 minutes.

03 Make the pie filling

Melt the butter in a separate large saucepan over medium-low heat. Whisk in the flour and cook for 2 to 5 minutes, whisking constantly, until a light roux forms. Slowly whisk in the curry, raise the heat to medium, and bring it to a low boil. Cook the filling until it is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon, about 15 to 20 minutes. Fold in the chicken and peas, and cook for 2 to 5 minutes, or until warmed through. Remove it from the heat and let it cool for 10 minutes.

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04 Assemble and bake the pie

Preheat the oven to 425°F (215°C). Pour the filling into a 9-inch (22.5 cm) pie pan, leaving a ½-inch (1 cm) gap at the top. (Note: If you have extra filling left over, set it aside to enjoy separately as a stew.) Drape the pie pastry over the filled pan, leaving a ½-inch (1 cm) overhang. Fold the overhang under itself against the flat rim of the pan and press gently with your fingers or a fork to create a tight seal. Cut four 2-inch (5 cm) slits in the top crust to allow for steam and brush the melted butter all over the top. Bake the pie on the center rack for 15 minutes, or until the crust begins to puff and turn golden. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F (175°C) and bake for an additional 35 minutes, or until the crust is deep golden brown and flaky. Let it cool for 10 to 15 minutes before slicing.