

## Coconut-Lemongrass-braised pork

2 tablespoons grapeseed oil or olive oil  
3 pounds boneless pork (pork butt is good here), cut into 1-to 2-inch cubes and patted dry, at room temperature  
Coarse salt, such as sel gris or kosher salt, and freshly ground pepper  
2 teaspoons turmeric  
1 1/4 teaspoons curry powder (Mild is suggested)  
Seeds from 6 cardamom pods  
6 white peppercorns  
6 coriander seeds  
2 strips lemon zest, white pith removed  
1/2 lemongrass stalk, tender center part only, pounded to crush it a bit  
1 15 1/2-ounce can unsweetened coconut milk, well stirred, plus more if needed  
1 1/2 cups water  
3 small potatoes, scrubbed or peeled and halved (optional)  
3 small carrots, trimmed, peeled, and halved (optional)  
3 small onions, halved (optional)  
1/2 small celery root, trimmed, peeled, and cubed (optional)  
1 teaspoon honey (optional)

Center a rack in the oven and preheat the oven to 300 degrees F.

Put a large skillet, preferably nonstick, over high heat and add the oil. When it's hot, toss in some of the pork—don't crowd the pan—and cook, stirring, until the pieces are golden on all sides. As the pieces are done, lift them out of the pot and place in a Dutch oven or other oven-going stew pot; season lightly with salt and pepper. Continue to brown the remainder of the pork.

Put the Dutch oven over medium heat and add the spices, lemon zest, lemongrass, and 1 teaspoon salt. Stir everything around until the spices are toasty—you'll smell them—and then stir in the coconut milk and water. Bring to a boil, cover the pot well, and slide it into the oven.

Allow the stew to braise undisturbed for 30 to 40 minutes, or until the pork is tender and cooked through, (if you plan to make the dish ahead, cook the pork for 15 to 20 minutes.)

While the stew is in the oven, cook the vegetables, if you're using them: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil and add the potatoes, carrots, onions, and celery root. Keep an eye on the pot, and remove the vegetables with a slotted spoon as they're tender. Transfer the vegetables to a bowl and set aside until the pork is cooked.

When the pork is done, put the Dutch oven over medium heat, add the vegetables, if you've got them, and bring the liquid to a boil. Reduce the heat to a gentle simmer and simmer just until the vegetables are heated through. If you think the sauce needs it, you can add a little more stirred coconut milk to the pot—it will heighten the braise's coconut flavor and thin the sauce (which is not particularly thick). Taste for salt and pepper, add a teaspoon of honey, if you'd like, and serve.

**MAKES 6 SERVINGS**

**SERVING** Because the sauce is so good and so plentiful, you'll want something to capture it—bread is an option, of course, but boiled rice or egg noodles are naturals as well.

**STORING** Like all stews, this one is very good the next day. If you want to make it ahead, cook the pork for a slightly shorter time, so that you don't overcook it when you reheat it. If you've got leftovers, remove the pork, reheat the sauce, and when it's hot, add the pork and simmer just long enough to warm it through.

Around My French Table Cookbook: Dorie Greenspan

