

The Best One-Pan Fish Stew with Coconut Milk and Fresh Cilantro

What makes this fish stew a permanent fixture in my kitchen rotation is its



TIME
20 min

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INGREDIENTS

Olive Oil: For sautéing the aromatics.
White Onion: One medium onion, finely chopped.
Garlic: 3 cloves, minced (don't be afraid to add a fourth if you're a garlic lover!).
Wild Cod: 1 lb, cut into 1-inch bite-sized pieces.
Large Tomato: 1 diced (fresh is best here!).
Coconut Milk: 1 full-fat can for maximum creaminess.
Sour Cream: 2 tablespoons to add a velvety tang.
Tomato Paste: 2 tablespoons to deepen the color and umami.
Bell Peppers: 1 red and 1 green, chopped for crunch and color.
Seasonings: Sea salt, black pepper, and red pepper flakes.
Garnish: Fresh cilantro, roughly chopped.

DIRECTIONS

- 1. Sauté the Aromatics:** In a large skillet, heat a drizzle of olive oil over medium heat. Add your finely chopped white onion and minced garlic. Sauté for about 3 minutes. You aren't looking to brown them deeply; you just want them translucent and fragrant so they release their natural sugars into the oil.
- 2. Create the Creamy Base:** Stir in the diced tomato, the entire can of coconut milk, the sour cream, and the tomato paste. Use a whisk or a wooden spoon to ensure the tomato paste and sour cream are fully incorporated into the coconut milk. Allow this mixture to simmer gently for about 3 minutes. This is where the "magic" happens as the flavors meld into a rich, orange-hued broth.
- 3. Add the Veggies and Fish:** Gently fold in your chopped red and green bell peppers and the cod pieces. I recommend cutting the fish into uniform cubes so they cook at the same rate. Stir gently to ensure every piece of fish is submerged in the liquid.
- 4. Season to Perfection:** Add your sea salt, black pepper, and red pepper flakes. Start with a pinch of flakes and work your way up-you can always add more heat, but you can't take it away!
- 5. Simmer and Cook:** Cover the skillet with a tight-fitting lid. This traps the steam, ensuring the fish stays succulent. Let it simmer for at least 10 minutes. At the 8-minute mark, check the fish with a fork; if it flakes easily, it's done.
- 6. Garnish and Serve:** Turn off the heat and finish the dish with a generous handful of fresh cilantro. The herbiness cuts through the richness of the coconut milk perfectly.

SWAPS & NOTES

The Fish: While I recommend wild cod for its flaky texture and mild flavor, you can easily swap it for tilapia, halibut, or even shrimp.

If you use a thinner fillet, reduce the simmering time slightly.

The Cream: For a dairy-free version, omit the sour cream and add an extra squeeze of lime juice at the end to provide that necessary acidity.

The Heat: This recipe uses red pepper flakes for a subtle kick.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Don't Overstir: Once the fish is in the pan, be very gentle.

White fish like cod is delicate and can break apart into mush if handled too roughly.

Prep Everything First: This recipe moves fast.

Have your veggies chopped and your cans opened before you turn on the stove.

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