

Brazilian Moqueca (Bahian Fish Stew) — Gluten-Free

Prep Time: 20 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 1½ lb firm white fish (cod, halibut, mahi-mahi), cut into 2-inch chunks
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 2 tbsp lime juice (fresh squeezed)
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, thin slices
- 1 red bell pepper, thin strips
- 1 yellow bell pepper, thin strips
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp paprika
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- 1 can (14 oz) diced tomatoes with juice
- 1 cup full-fat coconut milk
- 2 tbsp dendê oil (red palm oil, optional but authentic)
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro

- Extra lime wedges to serve
- Cooked white rice (gluten-free) for serving

Instructions (step by step)

1. Season fish: Place fish chunks in a bowl. Add salt, pepper, and lime juice. Toss gently to coat. Cover and let sit 10 minutes while you start the base.
2. Cook aromatics: Heat olive oil in a wide, heavy pot over medium heat. Add onion slices and cook 3–4 minutes until softened. Add red and yellow bell peppers; cook 3 minutes more.
3. Add garlic and spices: Stir in garlic, paprika, and cumin. Cook 30 seconds to release aromas.
4. Tomatoes: Add diced tomatoes (with their juice). Stir and simmer for 5 minutes to blend flavors.
5. Coconut milk: Pour in coconut milk. If using dendê oil, stir it in now. Bring to a gentle simmer — do not let it boil hard or the coconut milk can separate.
6. Poach fish: Place the fish pieces into the sauce in a single layer. Lower heat to

medium-low. Cover and cook 8–10 minutes, until the fish is opaque and flakes easily with a fork. Avoid stirring too much so the fish doesn't break apart.

7. Finish: Sprinkle chopped cilantro over the stew. Taste the broth and adjust salt or lime to your liking.

8. Serve: Ladle into bowls and serve with hot rice and extra lime wedges.

Benefits

- Lean protein from fish supports muscle health.
- Healthy fats from coconut milk promote satiety.
- Vitamin C from lime and peppers boosts immune support.
- Naturally gluten-free with no wheat-based thickeners.

Notes

- For a richer flavor, marinate fish up to 2 hours in the lime seasoning before cooking.

- Dendê oil gives a distinctive golden color and aroma — skip if unavailable, but it's the authentic touch.