

Chef James Rigato, a proud Schoolcraft College graduate, is the chef and owner of Mabel Gray in Hazel Park, Michigan. Known for his bold, ingredient-driven cuisine and commitment to local sourcing, Rigato celebrates Michigan's seasonal bounty through globally inspired dishes. A James Beard—recognized chef and former Top Chef contestant, he continues to champion sustainability, culinary education, and mentorship in the industry. Beyond the kitchen, he advocates for small farmers, community connection, and the next generation of culinary talent.



Jerk Marinated Quail

Curried Red Beans | Cucumber Salad



10 servings



45 minutes

INGREDIENTS

Brine (for 10 quail)

- 1 quart water
- 1/4 cup kosher salt
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- Fresh thyme sprigs
- 1/2 orange halved

Marinade

- Jerk marinade (enough to coat the quail thoroughly)

Curried Red Beans

- 1lb dried small red beans
- 1 medium diced Spanish (yellow) onion
- 3-4 cloves minced garlic
- 1/2-1 minced jalapeno
- 2Tbps coconut oil
- 2Tbsp Madras curry powder
- 1 quart San Marzano tomato puree
- 1 can coconut milk
- salt to taste
- Tabasco (optional to taste)
- Fresh lemon juice (to taste)
- Pinch of sugar

Cucumber Salad Garnish

- 1 English cucumber
- 1 small red onion
- 1 cup Cilantro leaves with some stems attached

PREP

1. Brine quail for 4 hours. Drain and let air dry in the fridge for 8-12 hours
2. Marinate air-dried quail overnight in jerk marinade
3. Soak beans overnight

PREPARE

Quail

1. Grill the quail make sure not to burn can finish in oven
2. Split down the middle once cooked

Curried Red Beans

1. Sauté onion, jalapeño, and garlic in coconut oil until translucent.
2. Add curry powder and bloom until aromatic.
3. Stir in tomato puree and coconut milk. Simmer gently.
4. Season with salt, Tabasco (optional), lemon juice, and a pinch of sugar.
5. Add cooked beans. Adjust consistency with coconut milk or bean liquid.
6. Hold warm or cool and reheat gently.

Cucumber Salad

1. Thinly sliced English cucumber
2. Cut onion into thin matchstick sized strips (julienne) then rinse onion in hot water, then shock in ice water
3. Toss cilantro leaves with onions and cucumber

ASSEMBLE

Cris-cross the quail over a small scoop of beans in a bowl. Drizzle a little fresh marinade over the top and garnish with the salad

Voila!