**Thai Pumpkin Soup**

1/2 pound shrimp, cleaned and deveined

3 garlic cloves, minced

1 onion, chopped

1 piece ginger (1 inch), chopped

½ teaspoon shrimp paste

2 chilies, seeded and chopped (we use jalapenos, but you can also use something milder like serrano chilies)

1 tablespoon lemongrass, minced

1 teaspoon curry powder

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

2 pounds pumpkin, peeled, cut in 1” cubes (Libby’s pumpkin also works)

4 cups chicken stock

3 cups coconut milk

1 tablespoon fish sauce

2 tablespoons lime juice

1 tablespoon sugar

salt and pepper, to taste

½ cup fresh Thai basil leaves

In a food processor, process shrimp, garlic, onion, ginger, shrimp paste, chilies, lemongrass and curry powder until a smooth paste is formed.

Heat oil in a large pot and sauté the paste. Add the pumpkin and toss well to coat. Add the chicken stock, bring to a boil, and cover pot. Cook at medium heat 15 minutes or until the pumpkin is tender.

Add the coconut milk and bring to a boil. Season with fish sauce, lime juice, sugar, salt and pepper. For a thicker soup, puree half the broth in a blender and return to the soup.

Just before serving, stir in basil leaves, reserving some for garnish. Serves 8.

Note: instead of salt and pepper, we use fish sauce (for salt) and additional chilies (for pepper). Also keep in mind as you’re seasoning that the bite from the chilies will become more pronounced over time.