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|  | **Ingredients** | **steps** |
| ***Spiced tuna and sticky rice in banana leaf*** | * **400 g** (2 cups) white sticky (glutinous) rice, soaked overnight * **180 ml** (¾ cup) coconut milk * **2 tsp** coriander seeds * **1 tsp** cumin seeds * **2** large red shallots (about 90 g), coarsely chopped * **3** cloves garlic, coarsely chopped * **4** candlenuts, chopped * **2** birds eye chilli, chopped * **1** lemongrass stem, white part only, chopped * **1½ tbsp**chopped galangal * **1 tsp** ground turmeric * **2 tbsp** peanut oil * **3** kaffir lime leaves * **1 x 425 g** can tuna in water, drained and coarsely flaked * **4** banana leaves * lime wedges, to serve   **Tomato salad**   * **400 g** mixed cherry tomatoes * **1** medium red onion * **2½ tbsp** kecap manis (sweet soy sauce), or to taste * **2 tbsp** lime juice, or to taste * small handful Thai basil leaves | * **Soaking time:** overnight or 8 hours * Drain the rice well then transfer to a steamer lined with muslin or a clean tea towel, spreading the rice evenly. * Cover with a tight-fitting lid, then cook over boiling water for 20 minutes or until tender. Transfer the rice to a bowl, add 125 ml (½ cup) coconut milk and use a large metal spoon to break the rice up and distribute the coconut milk evenly. * Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap and set aside. * Heat a small, heavy-based frying pan over medium-low. Add the coriander and cumin seeds and cook, shaking the pan often, for about 2 minutes or until the seeds are fragrant. * Remove from the pan, cool, then grind to a coarse powder in an electric spice grinder or pound in a mortar using a pestle. * Combine the spices in a small food processor with the shallots, garlic, candlenuts, chilli, galangal, turmeric and half the oil. * Remove the thick veins from the kaffir lime leaves and finely chop the leaves. * Add to the processor then process the mixture until a coarse paste forms, adding 2-3 teaspoons of water, as necessary, to loosen the mixture. * Heat the remaining oil in a saucepan over medium, add the paste and cook, stirring, for 2 minutes or until fragrant. * Add the remaining coconut milk and the tuna. Cook for 2–3 minutes, stirring, until the tuna is broken up and the mixture has dried out a little. * Remove from the heat and cool. * Wipe the banana leaves with a clean damp cloth, then trim the edges using kitchen scissors or a sharp knife. Cut eight 24 cm x 17 cm pieces from the leaves (note you won’t need all the leaves but the extra is to allow for tearing, etc). Holding each piece by a corner and using a pair of metal tongs, pass each piece briefly over a gas flame to soften all over. (If you don’t have gas, you can briefly blanch each piece in boiling water, to soften.) * Divide the rice mixture into 8 even-sized portions. Lightly oil your hands. Working with one portion and one piece of leaf at a time, and placing the banana leaf glossy side down on a work surface, press about two-thirds of a rice portion lengthwise in the centre of the leaf, to cover an area about 8 cm x 12 cm. Divide the filling into 8 even-sized portions. Place one portion of filling evenly on the top of the rice, piling it slightly and running it down the length of the rice. Take the remaining third of a portion of rice and use your hands to press it into a thin layer that will roughly cover the filling. Place it over the filling; don’t worry if it doesn't completely cover the filling. Fold the ends of the banana leaf over the rice mixture to cover the ends, then roll the banana leaf up over the filling to form a neat parcel. Using kitchen string, tie the parcel at 2 cm intervals to secure. Repeat with the remaining banana leaves, rice mixture and filling. * Place the parcels into a steamer, cover with a tight-fitting lid, then cook over boiling water for 20 minutes or until heated through. While the parcels are steaming, make the tomato salad. Cut large tomatoes into halves or quarters and cut any roma cherry tomatoes into thick slices. Cut the onion into petals. Combine in a bowl with the remaining ingredients and toss to combine well. * To serve, cut the strings from the parcels, then remove the banana leaves. Serve the rice parcels with lime wedges and tomato salad on the side |
| ***Mutton fried rice (nasi goreng kambing)*** | * **2 tbsp** vegetable oil * **200 g** mutton or lamb backstrap, cut into small cubes * **3** garlic cloves, sliced * **3** Asian red shallots, sliced * **2** long fresh red chillies, finely chopped * **740 g** (4 cups) refrigerated cooked rice * pinch of five-spice powder * **1 tsp** curry powder * **½ tsp** ground cumin * **1 head** pak choi, sliced * **50 g** white cabbage, thinly sliced * **40 g** (¼ cup) fresh peas * **2** spring onions (scallions), sliced * **2 tsp** dark soy sauce * **2 tbsp** kecap manis * pinch each of salt and pepper * **1 tbsp** fried shallots * **1 tbsp** thinly sliced spring onion (scallion) * **1** Lebanese cucumber, sliced * **2** tomatoes, sliced * **2** green bird’s eye chillies, sliced | * Heat a wok over high heat. Add 1 tablespoon of vegetable oil and swirl to coat the wok. Add the mutton and stir-fry for 1 minute or until seared. Transfer the mutton to a bowl and set aside. * Add the remaining oil to the wok, then sauté the garlic, shallot and chilli on medium heat for 2 minutes or until fragrant. * Add the rice, increase the heat to high and stir-fry for 5 minutes or until lightly browned and all the rice grains are separated. Add all the spices and continue to stir-fry for another 2 minutes or until fragrant. Add the pak choi, cabbage, peas and spring onion along with the mutton. Toss to combine well, then add the dark soy sauce, kecap manis and season with salt and pepper. * Transfer to a serving plate and garnish with fried shallot and spring onion. Serve with cucumber, tomato and green chilli. |
| ***Sea bass grilled in banana leaves*** | * **500 g** piece sea bass, skin on, cut into 4 even pieces * sea salt, to season * **4** banana leaf sheets, about 40 cm long * **1** long red chili, sliced * **8** coriander sprigs * steamed jasmine rice, to serve   **Marinade**   * **2 tsp** pounded galangal (about 2 cm piece) * **1 tbsp** pounded fresh turmeric (about 4 cm piece) * **1 tbsp** pounded lemongrass (1 stalk) * **1 tsp** pounded garlic * **½ tsp** red curry powder * **2 tbsp** vegetable oil * **2 tbsp** fish sauce | **Marinating time** 20 minutes   * To make the marinade, combine the pounded galangal, turmeric, lemongrass and garlic in a mortar and pound with a pestle to make a fine paste. * Transfer the paste to a mixing bowl, add the remaining marinade ingredients and stir to combine. * Season the fish with sea salt, then add to the marinade, turn to coat well and stand for 20 minutes. * Preheat a chargrill to medium. * Wrap each piece of fish in a banana leaf to completely enclose, then chargrill, folded-side down first for 6–8 minutes on each side, depending on the thickness of the fish. * Transfer the banana leaf parcels to serving plates, then use scissors cut the top of the parcels. Scatter with the sliced chili and coriander sprigs and serve immediately with steamed rice. |
| ***Stir-fried chicken and snake beans with chilli relish*** | * **3** red Asian shallots, diced * **300 g** chicken thigh fillets, cut into bite-sized pieces * **5 tbsp** chilli paste with soya bean oil (see Note) * **1 tbsp** light soy sauce * pinch of salt * **100 g** snake beans, cut into 5 cm lengths, blanched * **1** long fresh red chilli, sliced * **2** long dried red chillies, soaked in water for 10 minutes, sliced into 2 cm lengths * **2** spring onions (scallions), finely sliced * **2** coriander sprigs * steamed jasmine rice, to serve | * Heat the oil in a large frying pan or wok over medium heat. Sauté the garlic and red shallot for 2 minutes or until fragrant. Increase the heat to high, then add the chicken pieces and stir-fry for 2 minutes, then add the chilli paste, soy sauce and salt and stir-fry for another 2 minutes. Add the snake beans, sliced fresh and dried chili and spring onion, then stir-fry for another minute. Garnish with coriander and serve with steamed jasmine rice.   **Note**  • Chilli paste in soya bean oil is readily available in jars from Asian markets. I prefer the Pantai brand. |
| ***Silken tofu with ginger syrup (tahwa)*** | * **1 litre** (4 cups) Asian sweetened soy milk (see Note) * **1½ tsp** nigari powder (see Note) * **5 cm** piece ginger, peeled and finely sliced * **250 ml** (1 cup) freshly squeezed mandarin juice * **100 g** (½ cup) brown sugar | * **Chilling time** 2 hours or overnight if time permits * Heat the soy milk in a saucepan until you see some steam starting to rise, but not at boiling point. * Remove from the heat, then whisk in the nigari powder until fully dissolved. Pour into a bowl and stand until cool. * Once cooled, place a piece of plastic wrap directly onto the milk to prevent a skin from forming on the top. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours but overnight is better if time permits. * Place the ginger, mandarin juice and brown sugar in a small saucepan and bring to the boil over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Reduce the heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes. Strain into a jug and reserve the sliced ginger. The syrup can be served warm or at room temperature. * To serve, use a spatula to slice delicate slivers of the tofu into a small bowl, then pour 2–3 tablespoons of the ginger syrup over the top and garnish with a little reserved ginger. |