

35 Sambal Malaka

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Beb Vuyk's cook book has an extensive section on sambals (Indonesian chili sauces). My father always told me how his mother made sambal herself. Because we always buy it here, I thought it would be very difficult to make sambal, but with Beb's great and easy recipes this is not true. This sambal malaka is done in 45 minutes and you can make a lot at once.

Sambal from the store is long-lasting. Fresh sambals you have to finish quickly that's why I usually make a small amount. But this sambal malaka is different. You can keep longer if you fill up a super clean jar with the sambal still hot. Immediately close it. Now you can keep it for a long time. Once open, place it in the fridge and always use a clean spoon to take some sambal out.



Homemade sambal is delicious, tasty and often not as spicy as one would expect. Because of the large amount of onions and garlic, this sambal malaka is sweet. The shrimp paste creates that typical Indofood smell. I love the Indonesian -smelly- kitchen... ;-).

This sambal malaka is good for two full jars (see picture above) and is ready in 45 minutes.

Sambal Malaka from Beb Vuyk's Groot Indonesisch Koboek, page 65.

Ingredients

10 chopped lomboks (chili peppers)
10 tablespoons of chopped onions
6 cloves of garlic
2 teaspoons of laos powder (galangal root)
1 lemon grass cut in 4 pieces
asem (tamarind) size of a walnoot
1/8 piece of santen (coconut cream)
4 tablespoons of oil
salt
2 teaspoons of terasi (shrimp paste)

Rub onion, garlic, galangal, lemongrass, terasi and salt together in the mortar. Fry this paste (bumbu) in the oil until the onions are yellow. Rub the chili peppers in the mortar. Add the peppers, tamarind juice, made with 4 tablespoons of warm water, to the onions and garlic mix in the pan. Stir in the piece of coconut cream. Cook the sambal until the onions are done and the oil from the coconut cream comes floating to the surface.



A lot of garlic goes in to this sambal. I like. I use smooth shrimp paste not the hardened version that comes in blocks. The smooth paste mixes easily with the onions and garlic in the mortar (cobek). You can use a kitchen machine to mix and cut up all the ingredients. I prefer the mortar. Less to clean and pretty fast too.



I cut the lemon grass (sereh) in to 4 large pieces. I hit them a few times firmly in the mortar. All the juices come out. This sambal malaka has some fibers in it from the lemon grass. (I take out the big chunks before serving). You can use lemon grass powder, but the fresh grass is so much more tastier and it looks better too.



If your onions, garlic and spices are mixed and rubbed well, fry this bumbu in the pan on low heat. The smell of the trassi (shrimp paste) will fill up the house. Delicious! Meanwhile, rub the peppers. I leave all the seeds in.



If use tamarind paste from a jar. That works fine. Asem (tamarind) gives the sambal a light sour taste. I dilute the asem with some tablespoons of hot water.



While the sambal is simmering (for about 5 minutes) in the pan I add a tablespoon or two of water. Now my santen (coconut cream) can dissolve completely and the sauce will not dry out. The santen give this sambal a creamy taste and texture.

This sambal is not too spicy, because a large part of it are onions. You can make yours as hot as you want, of course. Use for example 'Madame Jeanette' peppers. They are crazy hot.

I will bring my sambal malaka to a dinner party with friends from Thailand. This sambal is great with Thai food too I think ;-). We shall see!



Beb Vuyk, best known for her Groot Indonesisch Kookboek (Great Indonesian Cook Book), was much more than a great cook. She belongs to the most important Dutch-Indonesian (Indo) writers and journalists of her time. Check this out.