

Meera Sodha

Aubergine Donburi



Prep **10 min**

Cook **1 hr 10 min**

Serves **4**

For the aubergines

350g short-grain rice

4 tbsp cooking sake

4 tbsp light soy sauce

2½ tbsp mirin

2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed

3 aubergines, cut lengthways into 1cm slices

Rapeseed oil, for frying

For the fried ginger and onions

3 tbsp rapeseed oil

50g ginger, peeled and cut into fine matchsticks

6 spring onions, trimmed and finely chopped

½ tsp fine sea salt

2 tsp white-wine vinegar

Wash the rice in a sieve until the water runs clear, then transfer to a saucepan for which you have a lid. Cover with warm water, soak for five minutes, then drain, cover with 400ml cold water and bring to a boil. Turn down the heat to a whisper, cook for 12 minutes, then take the pan off the heat and put to one side, still covered.

Meanwhile, make the donburi sauce. In a small bowl, mix the sake, soy sauce, mirin, garlic and a pinch of the match-sticked ginger from the dressing.

Line a plate or board with kitchen paper. Heat three tablespoons of oil in a wide frying pan over a medium heat, add the remaining ginger and spring onions, and cook for about eight minutes, until soft and beginning to caramelise. Tip into a bowl, stir in the salt and vinegar, and set aside.

Put a little more oil in the frying pan, then, cooking them in batches, lay in the aubergine slices side by side and fry for three minutes, or until golden brown. Turn over and fry on the other side until tender and golden brown, then transfer to the lined plate to drain and repeat with the remaining aubergine slices, adding more oil as required.

Once all the aubergines are fried, gently return them all to the pan in layers and turn down the heat. Pour the donburi sauce over the top, leave it to bubble for a couple of minutes, until reduced and sticky, then take off the heat. (If the sauce threatens to vanish altogether, add a little water to rehydrate - you want this a bit saucy.)

Distribute the hot rice between four plates, lay slices of aubergine on top and spoon over a little sauce. Add a scattering of the fried salted ginger and spring onion, and serve.