**SAMBAL TUMIS FI (FARIS ISYRAF)**

**Ingredients**

* 2/3 ounce (19g) dried whole Kashmiri chiles (about 18-20 chiles), stemmed (see notes)
* 1 large red onion (12 ounces; 340g), roughly chopped
* 3 medium cloves garlic (15g)
* 3 ounces (85g) whole ikan bilis (Southeast Asian dried anchovies), cleaned (about 2 ounces/60g cleaned; see notes)
* 1 1/2 cups (355ml) neutral oil, such as vegetable oil, divided
* 1 1/2 tablespoons palm sugar (3/4 ounce; 20g), preferably gula Melaka (see notes)
* 2 tablespoons (30ml) tamarind concentrate, such as Tamicon
* Kosher salt

**DIRECTIONS**

* In a 2-quart saucepan, boil 2 cups (473ml) water over high heat. Meanwhile, using kitchen shears, cut the dried chiles diagonally into 1/4-inch-thick (0.5cm) strips. Massage the strips gently to release as many seeds as possible to the bottom of the bowl. Transfer chile strips without the seeds to the boiling water and let boil until chiles are softened, about 2 minutes. Using a slotted spoon or spider, lift chiles out of saucepan and transfer to heatproof plate, leaving any stray seeds behind (seeds will make the sambal bitter, so it's important to remove them all).
* Using a food processor, process the onion and garlic, scraping down sides as needed, to a paste, about 30 seconds; scrape the onion and garlic paste into a bowl. Next, process the ikan bilis into fine powdery shards, 2 to 3 minutes; scrape into a separate bowl. Finally, process the boiled chiles with 1/2 cup (120ml) oil until well pureed, 3 to 5 minutes; transfer pureed chiles to a third bowl.

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* In a wok or large, deep stainless-steel skillet, heat the remaining 1 cup (235ml) oil over medium-low heat until shimmering. Add the onion and garlic paste, immediately reduce heat to low, and cook, stirring every few minutes, until the onions are very soft and translucent, about 35 minutes.

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* Stir in the ikan bilis and cook, stirring every few minutes, until the color deepens to a light brown and oil separates, about 10 minutes.

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* Stir in the chile puree and cook, stirring every few minutes, until color deepens and oil separates, about 35 minutes; be sure to lower the heat if it seems like the puree is foaming up or darkening too quickly, both signs that it's cooking too rapidly.

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* Stir in palm sugar, tamarind concentrate, and 1/2 cup (120ml) water. Cook, stirring often, until color is dark reddish brown, almost maroon-like, the sambal is thick, and oil has again separated from the paste, about 30 minutes longer; continue to regulate heat as needed so this process happens gently to avoid scorching the paste. (The exact color and consistency of the sambal is up to personal preference, though many nasi lemak stalls serve their sambal on the thicker, gloopier end, which is also my preference.) Remove from heat and season with salt.

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* Serve as an accompaniment to [nasi lemak](https://www.seriouseats.com/nasi-lemak-malaysian-coconut-rice-recipe-7197924) or as a condiment with your preferred carbohydrate.
* Enjoy your meal