

Ibu's Boujee Rendang Minang

2 Tbsp cumin seeds
2 Tbsp fennel seeds
1 Tbsp coriander seeds
1 star anise
5 cloves
2 sticks cinnamon
3 large red onions, peeled
1 head garlic, peeled
2.5-knob ginger, peeled
50 g bird's eye chillies
100 g fresh red chillies
50 g dried chillies
2 knobs galangal, 2.5-cm each, peeled
5 candlenuts
4 stalks lemongrass
1 kg beef cheek, cut into 2.5-cm chunks
Salt as needed
Vegetable oil as needed
1 turmeric leaf
8 kaffir lime leaves
500 ml fresh coconut milk
50 g tamarind paste, diluted with 50 ml water

Toast cumin, fennel and coriander seeds with star anise, cloves and cinnamon in a dry frying pan over medium heat until fragrant. Place toasted spices in a food processor together with onions, garlic, ginger, all the chillies, a knob of galangal, candlenuts and 3 stalks lemongrass. Blend until a fine paste forms. You may have to add a dash of water if the paste is too thick but not as fine. Set aside.

Drain excess water from the beef and pat dry with paper towels. Place on a tray and sprinkle liberally with salt. This helps the beef absorb flavours as well as makes it tender. Set aside until the *rempah* is ready.

Preheat the oven to 160°C.

In a Dutch oven over medium heat, add enough vegetable oil to cover the base of the pot. Once the oil is hot, add the *rempah* and sauté until it has dried up, or when the oil starts to separate

from the paste. This takes 15–20 minutes on medium-low heat. This process of *pecah minyak* is crucial in making the rendang. Be patient and continue stirring and sautéing the spices.

Add the remaining lemongrass and galangal, as well as the turmeric and lime leaves, then sauté for another 5 minutes. Add beef and stir to coat with the *rempah* before pouring in coconut milk. Stir once more, cover the pot, then place in the oven and cook for 2 hours. After an hour, stir the rendang, scraping the bottom of the pot to ensure nothing sticks. Cover the pot and let it finish cooking.

Remove the rendang from the oven, add tamarind juice and season with salt as desired. Serve with white rice.

Ayam Lemak Cili Api Negeri Sembilan

1 medium sized red onion
4 cloves garlic
5 pieces bird's eye chillies
1 piece fresh red chilli
1 inch ginger
1/2 inch fresh turmeric
1 stalk of lemongrass
3 pieces kaffir lime leaves
1 piece turmeric leaf
200g coconut milk
1 tbsp coconut oil
1 whole chicken, cut into 8 pieces
enough water to cover the chicken

Clean and pat dry the chicken pieces. Add about 1 tbsp of salt and let it sit for about 15 minutes to allow the chicken to absorb the salt and make it tender.

In the meantime, add onion, garlic, chillies, ginger and turmeric into a food processor and blender until it becomes a nice thick paste. Add water if necessary.

Heat a wok on medium heat, then add in the chicken. Stir continuously to remove the excess water and to remove any odour from the chicken. Add in the blended aromatics, lemongrass, turmeric leaves and lime leaves, then add enough water to cover the chicken. Cover the pot, reduce the heat and let it come to a gentle boil, for about 10 to 15 minutes.

Add in the coconut milk, salt to taste, then stir to incorporate the coconut milk into the chicken. Add in the coconut oil and switch off the heat. Serve with hot white rice.