INDONESIA / WILL'S GOURMET RECIPES

BAKSO BAKAR (GRILLED BEEF BALLS)

Bakso bakar is Malang's grilled meatball: beef balls simmered, marinated in a sweet chilli sauce, grilled on skewers and served with peanut sauce and a deep marrow-bone broth.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	45 min	3 h 30 min	4 h 15 min	Involved	Hot

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE STOCK

1.5 kg beef knuckle bones with marrow
1 leek, halved
4 garlic cloves
3 l water
1 tsp white pepper
Salt, to taste
1 stalk Asian celery (or celery leaves), chopped
2 spring onions, sliced

FOR THE MEATBALLS

500 g lean beef, finely minced
50 g tapioca starch
1 egg
2 garlic cloves, crushed
1/2 tsp white pepper
1 tsp salt

FOR THE GRILLING SAUCE

1 tbsp oil
3 garlic cloves, chopped
2 red chillies, blended
2 tbsp tomato sauce
3 tbsp kecap manis
1 tsp sugar
Salt, to taste

FOR THE PEANUT SAUCE

100 g peanuts, fried
3 red chillies, fried
3 garlic cloves, fried
3 shallots, fried
2 tbsp kecap manis
100 ml water
Salt, to taste

TO SERVE

8 bamboo skewers, soaked in water
Fried shallots

METHOD

MAKE THE STOCK

1. Cover the bones, leek and garlic with the water. Bring to the boil, skim, then simmer very gently for about 3 hours. Strain and season with white pepper and salt.

MIX THE MEATBALLS

2. Blend or pound the beef, egg, garlic, white pepper and salt to a smooth paste, working in the tapioca starch.

SHAPE AND COOK

3. Bring a pot of water to a simmer. Squeeze balls of mixture through your fist and drop them in. When they float, lift them out and drain.

MAKE THE GRILLING SAUCE

4. Fry the garlic and chilli in the oil for 1 to 2 minutes. Add the tomato sauce, kecap manis, sugar and salt, and cook for 1 minute more.

MAKE THE PEANUT SAUCE

5. Blend the fried peanuts, chillies, garlic and shallots with the kecap manis and water to a thick, chunky sauce. Season with salt.

SKEWER AND GRILL

6. Thread 4 balls on each skewer and brush with grilling sauce. Grill over medium coals for 8 to 10 minutes, turning, until browned and glossy.

SERVE

7. Reheat the stock with the celery and spring onion. Pour into bowls, add a bone if you like, and serve the skewers on the side topped with peanut sauce and fried shallots.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Ask your butcher for beef knuckle or shin bones with the marrow still in. Roast them first for a darker stock.

The stock can be made a day ahead. Chill and lift off the fat before reheating.

The balls can be poached and chilled overnight, which makes the grilling easy.

Will is in one of Malang's kampungs in East Java, cooking bakso bakar, a signature dish of the city. All around him families are getting ready for the evening, preparing their own street food. Malang's meatballs are different from those in the rest of Java: they are skewered, grilled and served separately from the broth.It starts with a great stock,...