INDONESIA / BALI UNCHARTED

BLAYAG

Blayag is a long rice cake wrapped in young palm leaf and steamed, eaten in Karangasem, East Bali with chicken cooked in coconut. It is a close cousin of lontong.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	20 min	2 h	2 h 20 min	Medium	Medium

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE BLAYAG

300 g short-grain rice, rinsed

500 ml water

1 tsp salt

Young palm leaf or banana leaf, for wrapping

FOR THE CHICKEN IN COCONUT SOUP

600 g chicken thighs, bone-in, cut into pieces

3 tbsp neutral oil

6 shallots

4 garlic cloves

20 g fresh turmeric

20 g ginger

15 g galangal

2 lemongrass stalks, bruised

2 salam leaves

500 ml coconut milk

300 ml water

Salt, to taste

TO SERVE

Fried tempeh

Boiled egg

Sambal

METHOD

MAKE THE BLAYAG

1. Soak the rice for 30 minutes, then drain. Cook it with the water and salt for 10 minutes until the water is mostly absorbed.
2. Roll a few spoons of the part-cooked rice tightly in strips of leaf into a long tube. Fold the ends and tie closed.
3. Simmer the tubes in water for about 1 hour 30 minutes until firm. Hang or stand them up to cool.

MAKE THE CHICKEN SOUP

4 Blend the shallots, garlic, turmeric, ginger and galangal into a paste. Fry it in the oil over medium heat for 5 minutes until fragrant.

5 Add the lemongrass, salam leaves and chicken. Stir until coated, then add the coconut milk and water.

6 Simmer gently for 30 to 35 minutes until the chicken is tender and the soup is golden. Season with salt.

TO SERVE

7 Unwrap the blayag, slice or break it into pieces and serve with the chicken soup, fried tempeh, egg and sambal.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Blayag is wrapped in young palm leaf, which is hard to find outside Bali. Banana leaf works for a lontong-style rice cake.

For a quick version, cook the rice in a tight foil or banana leaf parcel and steam for 1 hour.

The chicken soup keeps well for 2 days in the fridge.

Will visits Warung Bu Dek Ani in Amlapura, East Bali, for blayag. It is a rice cake wrapped in young palm leaf and steamed, and Will points out it is not a dish on its own but a well-known long lontong. He eats it with chicken cooked in coconut, nasi campur and fried tempeh.The leaf comes away like a tube....