WILL MEYRICK

SINGAPORE / SINGAPORE STREET FOOD

HOKKIEN BAK KUT TEH

Hokkien bak kut teh is the dark version of Singapore's pork rib soup: ribs, tofu puffs and mushrooms simmered with dark soy, garlic and Chinese spices, with cut chilli and you char kway for dipping.



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

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE SOUP

1 kg pork ribs, cut into pieces

2 whole heads of garlic, unpeeled

2 l water

8 dried shiitake mushrooms, soaked

12 fried tofu puffs

4 tbsp dark soy sauce

3 tbsp light soy sauce

1 tbsp oyster sauce

20 g rock sugar

Salt

FOR THE SPICES

2 cinnamon sticks

3 star anise

5 cloves

1 tbsp white peppercorns, cracked

1 tsp fennel seeds

10 g dried tangerine peel

10 g dang gui (angelica root), optional

1 tbsp goji berries

TO SERVE

4 you char kway (Chinese fried dough sticks), cut up

Steamed rice

3 red chillies, sliced, in 3 tbsp dark soy sauce

METHOD

START THE BROTH

1. Cover the ribs with cold water, boil for 5 minutes, drain and rinse.
2. Tie the cinnamon, star anise, cloves, pepper, fennel, tangerine peel and dang gui in a piece of muslin.

SIMMER

3 Put the ribs, garlic, spice bag and the 2 l water in a pot. Bring to the boil, skim and simmer for 1 hour.

4 Add the mushrooms, both soy sauces, oyster sauce and rock sugar. Simmer for 30 minutes, until the meat is tender and the broth is dark.

5 Add the tofu puffs and goji berries and cook for 10 minutes more. Taste for salt.

SERVE

6 Ladle into bowls. Serve with rice, you char kway to dunk and the chillies in dark soy.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

The whole garlic heads turn soft and sweet. Squeeze them out over the ribs.

Ready-made bak kut teh spice bags are fine; use the dark soy from the recipe to make it Hokkien style.

Do not skip the cut chilli. It is what wakes the broth up.

The third stop at Hong Lim Food Centre is Hokkien Street Bak Kut Teh, a stall in the Michelin Guide. Will describes it as a dark soy broth, a Chinese-style broth with lots of chilli, and some you char kway to dip in it.He soaks the you char kway in the broth and adds cut chilli, which gives it, he…