MALAYSIA / PENANG UNLOCKED

KOAY TEOW TH'NG, PENANG CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

Koay teow th'ng is a Teochew rice noodle soup: a clear chicken broth made with old hen, flat rice noodles, chopped chicken and fish balls. This Penang street version is simple, clean and light.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	15 min	1 h 30 min	1 h 45 min	Easy	Mild

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE BROTH

- 1 old hen or boiling fowl (about 1.2 kg), or 1 whole chicken
- 2.5 l water
- 1 onion, halved
- 3 cm ginger, sliced
- 1 tsp white peppercorns
- 1 tsp salt, plus more to taste

FOR THE BOWLS

- 400 g fresh flat rice noodles (or 250 g dried, soaked)
- 12 fish balls
- 100 g bean sprouts
- 2 spring onions, sliced
- Light soy sauce, to taste
- Sliced red chilli, to serve
- Fried garlic, optional

METHOD

MAKE THE BROTH

1. Put the hen in a pot with the water, onion, ginger, peppercorns and salt. Bring to a boil, skim off the foam, then simmer very gently for 1 hour for an old hen, or 40 minutes for a young chicken. Do not let it boil hard, so the broth stays clear.

PREPARE THE CHICKEN

2. Lift the chicken out and cool it for 10 minutes. Pull the meat off the bones and slice or chop it. Strain the broth and season with salt.

COOK THE NOODLES AND FISH BALLS

3 Heat the broth again. Poach the fish balls for 3 minutes. Blanch the noodles and bean sprouts in boiling water for 20 seconds and drain.

ASSEMBLE

4 Divide the noodles and bean sprouts between four bowls. Add the chicken and fish balls and ladle over the hot broth. Top with spring onion and serve with soy sauce and chilli on the side.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

An old hen gives a stronger broth than a young chicken. Ask a butcher or Asian grocer for a boiling fowl.

Keep the simmer low. A cloudy broth means it boiled too hard.

Use leftover chicken bones for the next batch of stock.

In episode 8 of Penang Unlocked, Will and Maxie stop on a whim at Koay Teow Soup on Cintra Street. It is an alley stall that has served kuey teow th'ng for nearly 30 years and is now run by the second generation. Will says it is hard to find street food still served on the street, and this is.The...