WILL MEYRICK

SINGAPORE / SINGAPORE STREET FOOD

MUTTON FRY WITH CURRY LEAF AND BLACK PEPPER

Mutton fry is the dry side dish of South Indian and Indian Muslim tables: mutton simmered until soft, then fried with black pepper, fennel seed and curry leaves until dark and crusted. Serve it with biryani, murtabak or plain rice.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	20 min	1 h 20 min	1 h 40 min	Medium	Hot

INGREDIENTS

TO COOK THE MUTTON

- 600 g boneless mutton or lamb shoulder, in 2 cm cubes
- 1 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp salt
- 30 g ginger, grated
- 5 garlic cloves, crushed
- 400 ml water

FOR THE DRY SPICES

- 2 tbsp black peppercorns
- 1 tbsp fennel seeds
- 1 tbsp coriander seeds
- 1 tsp cumin seeds

TO FRY

- 4 tbsp coconut oil or neutral oil
- 1 tsp mustard seeds
- 3 stems curry leaves
- 2 onions, finely sliced
- 2 dried red chillies
- 1 tsp dark soy sauce, optional
- Chinese celery or coriander, to finish

METHOD

COOK THE MUTTON

1. Put the mutton, turmeric, salt, ginger, garlic and water in a pan. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 50 to 60 minutes, until tender. Uncover and boil until the liquid is almost gone.

TOAST AND GRIND

2 Dry-roast the peppercorns, fennel, coriander and cumin for 2 minutes, until they smell toasted. Grind to a coarse powder.

FRY

3 Heat the oil in a wok over medium-high heat. Add the mustard seeds, and when they pop the curry leaves and dried chillies.

4 Add the onions and cook for 8 minutes, until brown. Add the mutton and its last spoonfuls of liquid.

5 Stir in the spice powder and fry for 10 to 12 minutes, letting the meat catch and crust between turns, until dark and dry. Add the dark soy sauce for a deeper colour.

6 Finish with Chinese celery and serve.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Cook the mutton a day ahead: cold meat fries better and breaks less.

Keep some of the pepper coarse. You want to bite into it.

Goat works the same way; give it 20 to 30 minutes longer in the first stage.

At Zam Zam in Kampong Glam the murtabak takes up half the table. Next to it is a small black bowl Will keeps going back to, of what he calls basically mutton fry.The pieces are dark, dry and chewy at the edges. Will names what he tastes: curry leaf, black pepper and fennel seed. That is the whole idea of…