SINGAPORE / SINGAPORE STREET FOOD

# NYONYA LAKSA WITH MORETON BAY BUGS

Nyonya laksa is the Peranakan coconut noodle soup: thick rice noodles in a rich broth of dried shrimp, lemongrass and coconut milk with laksa leaf. This Singapore version adds Moreton Bay bugs, scallops, fried tofu and egg.



| SERVES | PREP | COOK | TOTAL | DIFFICULTY | SPICE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 40 min | 50 min | 1 h 30 min | Involved | Hot |

## INGREDIENTS

### FOR THE REMPAH

10 dried red chillies, soaked
4 large red chillies
10 shallots
4 garlic cloves
3 lemongrass stalks, white part only
30 g galangal
20 g fresh turmeric (or 1 tsp ground)
5 candlenuts

1 tbsp toasted shrimp paste (belacan)
50 g dried shrimp, soaked and ground
1 tbsp ground coriander

### FOR THE BROTH

Shells and heads from the prawns and bugs
1.5 l water
5 tbsp neutral oil
400 ml coconut milk
10 laksa leaves (Vietnamese mint)
1 tbsp palm sugar
Fish sauce

### FOR THE BOWLS

4 Moreton Bay bugs, halved (or 2 small lobster tails)
12 large prawns, peeled
8 scallops
12 fried tofu puffs, halved
500 g fresh thick rice noodles
150 g bean sprouts
4 eggs, boiled for 8 minutes
Laksa leaves, finely shredded
2 tbsp chilli oil or sambal

## METHOD

### MAKE THE STOCK

1. Roast or fry the shells and heads in a little oil until red and fragrant. Add the water, simmer for 25 minutes and strain.

### COOK THE REMPAH

2. Blend the rempah ingredients until smooth. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium-low heat and fry the paste for 12 to 15 minutes, stirring, until dark and the oil separates.

### BUILD THE BROTH

3. Add the stock and the laksa leaves and simmer for 15 minutes. Add the coconut milk, tofu puffs and palm sugar and simmer gently for 5 minutes. Season with fish sauce.

### COOK THE SEAFOOD

4. Poach the bugs in the broth for 3 to 4 minutes, the prawns for 2 minutes and the scallops for 1 minute. Lift out as they are done.

### SERVE

5. Blanch the noodles and bean sprouts and divide between bowls. Ladle over the hot broth with the tofu, top with the seafood and half an egg or two, and finish with shredded laksa leaf and a spoonful of chilli oil.

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## USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Fry the rempah slowly. If it still smells of raw shallot, it is not ready.

Do not boil the broth hard once the coconut milk is in.

Make the rempah a day or two ahead and keep it in the fridge under a little oil.

Also at Maxwell Food Centre, Old Nyonya serves a laksa called the Royale, with Moreton Bay bugs in it, the flat-headed lobster with the sweet meat.It is a Nyonya-style laksa, a Singaporean one. Nyonya laksa is normally white, Will explains, but here they put in a little bit of chilli oil, scallops rather than cockles, fried tofu and thick rice…