MALAYSIA / PENANG UNLOCKED

PENANG WHITE CURRY MEE

Penang white curry mee is a rice noodle soup in a creamy coconut-milk broth, topped with cockles, cuttlefish, fish cake and tofu puff, and served with a curry-powder chilli oil. It is a Penang hawker classic that mixes Chinese and local cooking.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	30 min	40 min	1 h 10 min	Medium	Hot

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE BROTH

- 1.5 l chicken stock
- 3 shallots, peeled
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 400 ml coconut milk
- 1/2 tsp white pepper
- Salt and sugar, to taste

FOR THE CURRY CHILLI OIL

- 6 dried red chillies, soaked, drained and blended
- 2 tsp curry powder
- 100 ml neutral oil
- 1/2 tsp salt

FOR THE BOWLS

- 400 g fresh flat rice noodles (or 250 g dried, soaked)
- 200 g cockles, cleaned (or clams)
- 200 g cuttlefish or squid, scored and sliced
- 4 fish cake slices
- 8 tofu puffs, halved
- 150 g bean sprouts

METHOD

MAKE THE CHILLI OIL

1. Heat the oil in a small pan over medium heat. Add the blended chillies and cook for 5 to 6 minutes, until the water has cooked off and the oil turns red. Stir in the curry powder and salt, cook for 30 seconds, and set aside.

MAKE THE BROTH

2 Simmer the stock with the shallots and garlic for 20 minutes. Pour in the coconut milk and white pepper and bring to a gentle simmer, not a hard boil. Season with salt and a pinch of sugar.

COOK THE TOPPINGS

3 Poach the cockles in the simmering broth for 1 to 2 minutes, until they open, and lift them out. Blanch the cuttlefish for 30 seconds, then the fish cake and tofu puffs for 1 minute. Blanch the bean sprouts and noodles in boiling water for 20 seconds and drain.

ASSEMBLE

4 Divide the noodles and bean sprouts between four bowls. Top with cockles, cuttlefish, fish cake and tofu puff. Ladle over the hot broth and serve with the chilli oil on the side. Add it by the spoonful.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Fresh cockles are hard to find outside Asia. Clams or mussels work in the same way.

Make the chilli oil a day ahead. It keeps for a week in the fridge.

Do not boil the coconut broth hard or it will split.

In episode 5 of Penang Unlocked, Will and Maxie Millian visit Hot Bowl White Curry Mee on a tip from Penang local Girlie Chua. It is a small shop with over 30 years of history, now in the Michelin Bib Gourmand list.The bowl has a white, coconut-milk broth with cockles, cuttlefish, fish cake, tofu puff, rice noodles and bean sprouts....