INDONESIA / STREET FOOD TRAVELLER

PEPES TUNA JIMBARAN

Pepes tuna is a Balinese parcel of sliced tuna or bonito, bumbu Jimbaran and lemon basil, wrapped in banana leaf and grilled over charcoal. Serve it with a fresh sambal kecap.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	40 min	15 min	55 min	Medium	Hot

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE FISH PARCELS

- 500 g tuna or bonito fillet, bloodline removed, thinly sliced
- 8 tbsp bumbu Jimbaran (see below)
- 2 tomatoes, cut into wedges
- 2 shallots, sliced
- 2 red chillies, chopped
- A large handful of lemon basil (kemangi) leaves, or Thai basil
- 3 kaffir lime leaves, very finely shredded
- Juice of 1 jeruk limo or lime
- Salt, to taste
- 8 banana leaves, softened over a flame
- Toothpicks

FOR THE BUMBU JIMBARAN

- 8 shallots
- 6 garlic cloves
- 4 candlenuts
- 4 large red chillies
- 3 bird's eye chillies
- 2 lemongrass stalks, white part, sliced
- 25 g turmeric
- 1 tomato
- 1 tbsp tamarind pulp
- 1 tsp salt

FOR THE SAMBAL KECAP

- 4 tbsp kecap manis (sweet soy sauce)
- 2 shallots, diced
- 2 red chillies, chopped
- 1 lime, diced including the skin
- 1 jeruk limo or lime, juiced
- 1 tbsp water
- 1 tsp light soy sauce
- Salt, to taste

METHOD

MAKE THE PASTE

1 Blend the bumbu Jimbaran ingredients into a thick paste.

PREPARE THE FILLING

2 In a bowl, mix the sliced fish with 8 tablespoons of paste, the tomato wedges, shallots, chillies, lemon basil and lime leaf. Add the lime juice and a pinch of salt.

WRAP

3 Pass each banana leaf over a flame for a few seconds until soft and shiny, which stops it cracking.

4 Layer two leaves for each parcel. Put a quarter of the filling in the middle, fold the sides over and close the ends with toothpicks.

GRILL

5 Cook over charcoal, on glowing embers with no flame, for 12 to 15 minutes, turning a couple of times, until the leaf is charred and the fish is cooked through.

MAKE THE SAMBAL KECAP

6 Mix the kecap manis with the shallots, chillies, lime, lime juice, water and soy sauce. Season with salt.

SERVE

7 Open the parcels at the table. Serve with the sambal kecap, lime wedges and fresh lemon basil.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

No charcoal: use a hot grill pan or the oven at 220 C for 15 to 18 minutes, and wrap in foil as well if you have no banana leaves.

Banana leaves are in Asian grocery stores, usually frozen. Defrost and wipe them first.

Snapper or mackerel work well if you cannot find bonito.

Will goes to Jimbaran, home of the largest fish market in Bali, where locals buy fish for restaurants all over the island. The tuna he sees is all line-caught, so it is sustainable, and he tests its quality by pushing a skewer in and checking it. This is also where he gets ideas for his menus, from what is in...