SINGAPORE / SINGAPORE STREET FOOD

POPIAH, PERANAKAN FRESH SPRING ROLLS

Popiah is a soft, fresh spring roll from the Peranakan and Hokkien kitchens of Singapore, filled with braised yam bean, lettuce, egg, shrimp, peanuts and a sweet and spicy sauce. It is rolled to order and never fried.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	50 min	50 min	1 h 40 min	Medium	Medium

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE BRAISED FILLING

- 600 g yam bean (jicama), cut into matchsticks
- 1 carrot, cut into matchsticks
- 3 tbsp neutral oil
- 4 garlic cloves, chopped
- 30 g dried shrimp, soaked and chopped
- 1 tbsp fermented soybean paste (taucu)
- 1 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp sugar
- 300 ml stock or water

FOR THE ROLLS

- 12 popiah skins (fresh spring roll wrappers)
- 12 soft lettuce leaves
- 2 eggs, made into a thin omelette and shredded
- 200 g small cooked shrimp
- 100 g bean sprouts, blanched
- 80 g thin rice noodles, soaked and blanched
- 100 g roasted peanuts, ground
- Fried shallots
- Coriander leaves

FOR THE SAUCES

- 5 tbsp sweet flour sauce (tian mian jiang) or hoisin
- 4 red chillies, ground with 2 garlic cloves

METHOD

BRAISE THE FILLING

1. Heat the oil over medium heat and fry the garlic and dried shrimp for 2 minutes. Add the soybean paste and cook for 1 minute.

2 Add the yam bean, carrot, soy, sugar and stock. Simmer for 35 to 40 minutes, until soft and almost dry. Drain in a sieve and keep warm.

SET UP

3 Put the rest of the ingredients in small bowls. Keep the popiah skins under a damp cloth.

ROLL

4 Lay a skin flat. Spread with a little sweet sauce and chilli. Put a lettuce leaf in the centre, then 2 to 3 tbsp of well-drained yam bean.

5 Add bean sprouts, noodles, omelette, shrimp, peanuts, fried shallots and coriander.

6 Fold in the sides and roll up tightly. Cut into 3 or 4 pieces and eat straight away.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Drain the yam bean very well. Wet filling breaks the skin.

The lettuce goes under the filling to protect the wrapper.

Fresh popiah skins are sold frozen. Defrost fully and separate them while still damp.

Dunman Food Centre sits beside Joo Chiat Road, the area with the Peranakan houses, so you see a lot more Chinese Peranakan food here.Will starts with popiah, a Malay Peranakan style of roll. In it are yam bean, lettuce, peanuts, egg, shrimp and some noodles. The film shows the uncle filling it and rolling it by hand. Very good, says...