SINGAPORE / SINGAPORE STREET FOOD

YONG TAU FOO

Yong tau foo is a clear noodle soup with tofu, gourd and bean curd skin stuffed with fish and prawn paste. You dip each piece in chilli sauce and fermented bean curd as you eat.



SERVES	PREP	COOK	TOTAL	DIFFICULTY	SPICE
4	50 min	45 min	1 h 35 min	Involved	Medium

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE FISH AND PRAWN PASTE

350 g firm white fish fillet (mackerel or snapper), cold

250 g raw prawns, peeled

1 egg white

1 tbsp cornflour

1 tsp salt

1/2 tsp ground white pepper

1 tsp sesame oil

TO STUFF

8 fried tofu puffs

300 g firm tofu, cut into 8 triangles

1 small bitter gourd or sponge gourd, in 2 cm rings, seeds out

2 sheets bean curd skin

Neutral oil, for frying

FOR THE SOUP

200 g dried anchovies (ikan bilis), rinsed

150 g dried soybeans, soaked

2 l water

20 g ginger, sliced

1 tbsp fish sauce

TO SERVE

300 g dried rice vermicelli (bee hoon), soaked

Spring onions, sliced

Fried shallots

FOR THE DIPS

3 tbsp chilli sauce

2 cubes fermented bean curd, mashed with 1 tsp sugar and 1 tbsp hot water

METHOD

MAKE THE SOUP

1 Simmer the anchovies, soybeans, ginger and water for 40 minutes. Strain and season with the fish sauce.

MAKE THE PASTE

2. Chop the fish and half the prawns very finely, or pulse in a processor. Add the salt and egg white and stir in one direction until sticky, then slap the paste against the bowl for 3 minutes.
3. Chop the rest of the prawns roughly and fold in with the cornflour, pepper and sesame oil. Chill for 20 minutes.

STUFF

4. Cut a pocket in the tofu puffs and triangles and fill with paste. Fill the gourd rings. Spread paste over the bean curd skin, roll up and cut into short lengths. Shape what is left into balls.
5. Fry the tofu triangles, gourd and bean curd rolls in shallow oil for 2 to 3 minutes, paste side first, until golden.

FINISH

6. Simmer all the pieces in the soup for 5 to 6 minutes, until they float and are cooked through.
7. Cook the vermicelli, drain and divide between bowls. Add the stuffed pieces, ladle over the soup and top with spring onions and fried shallots.
8. Serve with the chilli sauce and fermented bean curd to mix and dip.

USEFUL SHORTCUTS FOR HOME COOKS

Keep the fish and prawns cold, that is what makes the paste bouncy.

For the dry version, toss flat rice noodles with dark soy, sesame oil and a little chicken fat and serve the soup on the side.

Ready-made fish paste from an Asian supermarket saves half the work.

The Albert Centre in the Bugis area is known for its yong tau foo. Will gets his at Bai Nian Niang Dou Fu, in two versions: dry flat rice noodles with the soup on the side, and the wet one with bee hoon in the bowl.Inside are fish stuffed in gourd, prawn balls, rolled-up tofu and bean curd, steamed and...