

**Cook**

# Indonesian

**in America**



Recipes with love from

**The Robot Book  
Club**

# **Cook Indonesian in America**

*Vibrant Archipelago Flavors for the Modern Home Kitchen*

The Robot Book Club

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# Preface

This book, and The Robot Book Club, is an experiment large scale AI generation. Every page, from layout to images to copy, was generated with zero human review.

The authoring and publishing teams were implemented in the Kaya scripting language. They were given only the input: Indonesian.

This is the only page authored by a human: Hello there!

— Ted Benson

# Prologue

There's a smell. Not the exotic perfume whispered by some glossy travel brochure, but the deep, insistent hum of toasted shrimp paste, the sharp, bright cut of bruised lemongrass, the earthy, reassuring thrum of galangal hitting hot oil. It's the signature of a kitchen, somewhere, anytime, where home was conjured. For some, that signature is still etched in the air of a *kampung* in Java. For others, it's a ghost memory, a visceral pull from family stories, a connection to a homeland perhaps never seen, but deeply felt in the marrow of their bones. This book is for them. It's for the children of the diaspora, the inheritors of those tantalizing aromas, navigating the aisles of an American supermarket while yearning for the honest, unvarnished flavors of a Tuesday night in Surabaya.

The world moves fast. Weeknights are a blur. Who, these days, has the luxury of a stone *cobek* and endless hours to grind spices from scratch? The challenge, then, is formidable: how to recreate that soul-deep authenticity without surrendering to convenience-store compromise. This isn't a diluted version. This is the real deal, translated. It's about channeling your grandmother's intuition, that effortless grace with a *bumbu* paste, and bringing it into your modern kitchen. It's about making do with macadamia nuts instead of candlenuts, about finding lime leaves at the local Asian grocer, and making magic with a food processor, not a mortar and pestle.

This isn't just a collection of recipes. It's an invitation to reclaim a rhythm. To understand the communal heart of *Makan Tengah*, to rediscover the comforting heft of a *Sarapan Pagi*, to indulge in the mischievous delight of *Jajanan SD*. It's about the healing power of a mother's *Soto Ayam* when the *angin* enters, and the

celebratory spectacle of a *Rendang* shared with family and friends. It's about feeding more than just a stomach; it's about nourishing a heritage. These pages are a roadmap, proving that distance is no match for a truly authentic craving.

So, roll up your sleeves. The kitchen awaits. The aromas of home are calling, ready to be answered.





# The Blueprint of Bumbu: Foundational Spice Pastes

*Mastering the essential, unapologetic spice pastes that form the soul of Indonesian home cooking, translated for the modern kitchen.*

The soul of the Indonesian kitchen doesn't start in a hot pan; it starts in the mortar. It is the rhythmic, punishing thud of stone against stone—a grandmother pulverizing shallots, chilies, and galangal into submission long before dawn. This is bumbu, the unapologetic engine room of the cuisine,

dictating the depth of every braise, soup, and stir-fry that follows. But let's be brutally honest: you aren't waking up at 4:00 AM, and you have a perfectly good food processor sitting on your counter. What follows is not a compromise, but a translation. Here are the master pastes—the red, the white, the yellow, the raw, and the deeply pungent—recalibrated for the American kitchen without losing an ounce of their ancestral grit. Batch them, freeze them, and let the real cooking begin.





# Opor Ayam Super Cepat

*oh-poor ah-yam soo-per che-pat*

For a first-generation kid, the rich, floral aroma of Opor Ayam simmering on the stove is the undeniable scent of homecoming. In Central Java, this velvet-smooth coconut braise was traditionally a labor of love, demanding hours of slow cooking to tenderize a tough, free-range village bird. Modern weeknights require a more pragmatic approach, but one that refuses to compromise the soul of the dish. By leaning on a properly bloomed white spice paste and swapping in accessible, flavor-packed chicken thighs, this adaptation delivers all the nostalgic depth of a holiday meal in thirty minutes. The secret lies in toasting your spices and respecting the gentle, rolling emulsion of the coconut milk.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 lb</b>	bone-in skin-on chicken thighs	<b>1 tsp</b>	coconut sugar
<b>2 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 med stalk</b>	fresh lemongrass <i>tough outer layers removed, bruised, and tied into a knot</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	white pepper
<b>1 small piece</b>	fresh galangal <i>sliced into thin discs and bruised</i>	<b>10 med clove</b>	French shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>3 large</b>	kaffir lime leaves <i>central stem removed</i>	<b>4 med</b>	garlic
<b>2 med</b>	dried Indonesian bay leaves <i>or omit entirely; do not use Western bay leaves</i>	<b>4 med</b>	raw macadamia nuts <i>lightly toasted in a dry pan</i>
<b>2 cup</b>	low-sodium chicken broth	<b>1 tbsp</b>	whole coriander seeds <i>lightly toasted in a dry pan</i>
<b>1 cup</b>	full-fat canned coconut milk <i>stirred well</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	whole cumin seeds <i>lightly toasted in a dry pan</i>
		<b>1 small piece</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Process the paste ingredients.**

In a food processor or blender, combine the chopped shallots, garlic, toasted macadamia nuts, coriander, cumin, and ginger with a splash of water, pureeing until completely smooth.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Awaken the bumbu.**

Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed Dutch oven over medium heat and cook the pureed spice paste, stirring constantly, until the moisture evaporates and the oils begin to separate from the solids. This technique, 'pecah minyak', is non-negotiable; raw shallot flavor will ruin the delicate broth.

**1. Infuse the aromatics.**

Drop in the bruised lemongrass, galangal, kaffir lime leaves, and dried Indonesian bay leaves, stirring for another minute or two until the kitchen smells intensely fragrant and floral.

**2. Sauté and braise.**

Add the chicken thighs to the pot, stirring to coat them entirely in the aromatic paste. Let the meat cook in the concentrated spices for about five minutes, locking the essential oils into the skin before any liquid is introduced.

**3. Simmer the broth.**

Pour in the chicken broth, coconut sugar, salt, and white pepper. Bring the liquid to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low, cover, and simmer for twenty minutes until the chicken is tender and cooked through.

**4. Finish with coconut milk.**

Reduce the heat to its lowest setting, remove the lid, and slowly pour in the coconut milk. Using a ladle, gently stir the pot in a continuous circular motion for five minutes, occasionally lifting the broth and pouring it back in. Never let it boil, or the coconut fat will separate and ruin the silky gravy.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Respect the bay leaf difference.**

Western Laurel bay leaves are piney and minty, while Indonesian Daun Salam is earthy and subtly sweet. If you cannot find dried Daun Salam at your local Asian grocer, leave it out entirely. Do not ruin your mother's recipe with Italian bay leaves.

● **Macadamia nuts are a flawless substitute.**

Fresh candlenut (kemiri) is incredibly difficult to source in America, and pre-packaged versions are often rancid. Raw macadamia nuts offer the exact lipid profile and thickening magic required for a perfect white spice paste.



## Telur Balado

The smell of bumbu balado hitting hot oil is the unmistakable signal that dinner is going to be spectacular. Originating from the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra, true balado is a foundational technique—a blistering communion of coarse chilies, shallots, and oil, unapologetically devoid of the garlic and sweet soy sauce found in diaspora adaptations. Hard-boiled eggs are deep-fried until their exteriors turn rugged and porous, transforming them into perfect sponges for the fiery, intensely savory paste. This is grandma's austere, perfectly calibrated culinary geometry, engineered for an American weeknight.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>6 large</b>	eggs	<b>4 large</b>	shallots <i>peeled and roughly chopped</i>
<b>1/2 cup</b>	neutral cooking oil <i>for blistering eggs</i>	<b>1 med</b>	Roma tomato <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil <i>for frying spice paste</i>	<b>2 med</b>	makrut lime leaves <i>fresh or frozen</i>
<b>4 large</b>	Fresno chilies <i>stems removed and roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>3 med</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>stems removed</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	granulated sugar
		<b>1 tsp</b>	fresh lime juice

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. **Boil, peel, and thoroughly dry the eggs.**

Cover the eggs with cold water, bring to a rolling boil, then remove from heat and cover for 10 minutes. Cool in an ice bath, peel, and pat them entirely dry with paper towels to prevent explosive splattering when they hit hot oil.

### 2. **Blister the eggs to create a porous crust.**

Heat the half cup of oil in a wok over medium-high heat. Fry the eggs for 2 to 3 minutes, rolling them around until golden and deeply wrinkled, then remove to a paper towel and carefully pour out all but 3 tablespoons of the oil.

### 3. **Pulse the bumbu into a coarse paste.**

Combine the Fresno chilies, Thai chilies, shallots, and Roma tomato in a food processor. Pulse until finely chopped but still textured—it should resemble chunky salsa, not a smooth puree, because a coarse grind fries while a puree merely boils.

### 4. **Fry the spice paste until the oil separates.**

Return the wok to medium heat and add the chili paste and lime leaves. Fry for 8 to 10 minutes until the moisture evaporates, the raw grassy smell mellows, and the oil separates into a vibrant, fiery red slick.

**1. Marry the dish and finish with lime.**

Season the fiercely savory bumbu with the salt and sugar. Toss the blistered eggs back into the wok to soak up the chili oil for a couple of minutes, then remove from the heat and finish with a squeeze of fresh lime juice.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Managing the splatter.**

Deep-frying boiled eggs is a violent affair if there is any water left on the egg white. Pat them aggressively dry, and consider pricking the whites lightly with a fork to allow expanding steam to escape.

● **Heat calibration.**

The Fresno chilies provide the necessary volume, color, and sweetness without melting your face off. The Thai bird's eye chilies are your volume dial—use two for a gentle hum, or four to replicate the searing heat of a West Sumatran warung.



# Tahu & Tempe Goreng Bumbu Kuning

*tah-hoo & tem-pay go-reng boom-boo koo-ning*

To the uninitiated, tossing raw tempeh into a marinade before frying seems logical. It's also a guaranteed way to end up with burnt spices and thoroughly bland protein. The real secret of the Indonesian kitchen is *ungkep*—a method of gently boiling tofu and tempeh in a turmeric-heavy spice paste until every drop of liquid evaporates, forcing those vibrant, earthy flavors straight into the core of the food. It's an ancient technique born of necessity, but it happens to be the ultimate meal-prep trick for a modern weeknight.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>8 oz</b>	plain tempeh <i>cut into 1/2-inch thick rectangles</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	whole coriander seeds
<b>14 oz</b>	extra-firm tofu <i>drained, lightly pressed, and cut into 8 uniform rectangles</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	salt
<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	water	<b>1 tsp</b>	sugar
<b>1/2 cup</b>	neutral oil <i>for shallow frying</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder
<b>4 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 stalk</b>	lemongrass <i>outer layers removed, thick bottom half smashed</i>
<b>4 clove</b>	garlic	<b>1 inch</b>	fresh galangal <i>sliced into thick coins and smashed</i>
<b>3</b>	unsalted macadamia nuts	<b>2</b>	Indonesian bay leaves
<b>1 inch</b>	fresh turmeric <i>peeled</i>	<b>3</b>	makrut lime leaves <i>central ribs removed and leaves slightly torn</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Press the tofu.**

American supermarket tofu is considerably more water-logged than what you'll find in an Indonesian market. To keep it from disintegrating during the braise, buy extra-firm tofu and press it for 15 minutes between paper towels under a heavy pan.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Blend the bumbu into a smooth paste.**

In a food processor, combine the shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, turmeric, coriander, salt, sugar, and bouillon powder. Add a tablespoon of water to help the blades catch, blending until it forms a perfectly smooth, mustard-yellow paste.

**1. Simmer the aromatics and spice paste.**

Transfer the blended paste to a wide, deep skillet or wok. Add the 1 1/2 cups of water, and drop in the smashed lemongrass, galangal, Indonesian bay leaves, and makrut lime leaves. Stir over medium heat until the liquid comes to a gentle simmer and the raw smell of the garlic dissipates, about 2 to 3 minutes.

**2. Braise the proteins until the pan is bone dry.**

Carefully nestle the tofu and tempeh slices into the bubbling yellow broth in a single layer. Turn the heat down to medium-low, cover with a lid, and let simmer for 15 minutes. Remove the lid, gently flip each piece, and continue to cook uncovered until the water has completely evaporated. The proteins should be stained a vivid golden-yellow, coated in a thick, spiced sediment.

**3. Fry the tofu and tempeh to a deep golden crisp.**

When ready to eat, heat a quarter-inch of neutral oil in a non-stick skillet over medium-high heat. Brush any large chunks of aromatics off the tofu and tempeh so they don't burn, then fry for 2 to 3 minutes per side until the edges are deeply browned and caramelized. Drain on paper towels and serve hot.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The meal-prep advantage.**

The brilliance of the unkep method is preservation. Once the water has boiled off in step three, the spiced proteins can be cooled completely and kept in an airtight container in the fridge for up to a week, ready for a quick five-minute fry whenever you need them.

● **Navigating substitutions.**

Macadamia nuts stand in perfectly for traditional candlenuts, providing the necessary fat to bind the paste. If fresh turmeric is unavailable, substitute 1 teaspoon of turmeric powder. Do not substitute Western bay leaves for Indonesian bay leaves (daun salam); simply omit them if they cannot be found.



# Nasi Goreng Kampung

*nah-see go-reng kahm-poong*

In the villages of Indonesia, fried rice isn't a careless vehicle for emptying the refrigerator—it's a masterclass in the *bumbu*. To reproduce that nostalgic, smoky, uncompromising aroma of the homeland in an American kitchen, you must respect the foundational paste. Infuse your wok oil with crispy dried anchovies, then have the patience to fry the pungent, shrimp-paste-laced *bumbu* in that very oil until it darkens and the raw sulfur vanishes. We keep the sweet soy sauce to a whisper here; let the earthy, maritime umami do the talking.

## INGREDIENTS

**6 med** shallot  
*roughly chopped*

**3 med** garlic clove  
*roughly chopped*

<b>8 med</b>	Thai bird's-eye chilies <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>4 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil
<b>1 tsp</b>	terasi	<b>2 large</b>	eggs
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	coarse kosher salt	<b>2 cup</b>	kangkung <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>3 cup</b>	cooked jasmine rice <i>chilled overnight and dry to the touch</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	kecap manis
<b>1/3 cup</b>	small dried Asian anchovies <i>rinsed quickly and patted completely dry</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground white pepper
		<b>1/2 tsp</b>	mushroom bouillon

## PREPARATION

- **Grind the aromatic foundation.**

Pulse the shallots, garlic, chilies, terasi, and salt in a food processor until finely minced, stopping before it turns into a watery liquid.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Infuse the cooking oil with anchovies.**

Heat the neutral oil in a large wok or wide skillet over medium heat, add the dried anchovies, and fry for 2 to 3 minutes until golden brown and crispy. Remove them with a slotted spoon, leaving the infused oil in the pan.

- 2. Sauté the bumbu to eliminate raw flavors.**

Add your crushed paste to the anchovy-infused oil and cook over medium heat for 3 to 4 minutes until it darkens, separates from the oil, and smells deeply sweet and nutty.

- 3. Scramble the eggs into the paste.**

Push the sautéed aromatics to one side of the wok, crack the eggs into the empty space, let them set for 10 seconds, then vigorously scramble them into the paste.

- 4. Execute the high-heat toss.**

Crank the heat to high, add the cold rice, and use your spatula to break up any clumps while tossing vigorously so every grain is coated in the flavorful base.

**1. Season and caramelize the rice.**

Drizzle the sweet soy sauce around the edges of the hot metal so it caramelizes instantly, sprinkle in the white pepper and mushroom bouillon, and toss constantly for 3 to 5 minutes until the rice is slightly toasted.

**2. Wilt the greens and assemble.**

Toss in the chopped greens for 30 to 60 seconds until slightly wilted but still crunchy. Turn off the heat, fold in half of the reserved crispy anchovies, and serve immediately.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Rice is everything.**

If you don't have day-old rice, cook a fresh batch with 15 percent less water and spread it on a baking sheet in the freezer for 20 minutes to artificially dry the surface.

● **Respect the terasi.**

Do not substitute the shrimp paste with Chinese black bean paste or skip it; the fermented maritime funk is the uncompromising soul of this dish.

● **Sourcing the greens.**

If you cannot find kangkung (water spinach) at your local Asian grocer, robust standard spinach, watercress, or roughly chopped bok choy leaves are perfectly acceptable substitutes that provide the necessary crunch.



## Ayam Pan-Seared dengan Sambal Matah

If there is a dish that teleports you straight to a sun-drenched Balinese courtyard, it is this. Sambal matah is less a sauce and more an electric, raw relish of shallots, lemongrass, and lime leaves. The grandma’s secret—the maneuver that elevates it from a mere chopped salad to a revelation—is the shock of smoking-hot coconut oil poured directly over the herbs, instantly blooming their fragrant essential oils. Paired with quick-cooking chicken thighs heavily seared in a sweet soy marinade to mimic an outdoor charcoal grill, it delivers uncompromising, authentic archipelago flavor on a random Tuesday night in Ohio.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	boneless skinless chicken thighs	<b>3 med stalk</b>	fresh lemongrass <i>tough outer layers removed, bottom 3 inches sliced into paper-thin rings</i>
<b>3 med clove</b>	garlic <i>minced or grated</i>	<b>6 med leaf</b>	makrut lime leaves <i>stiff central stems removed, sliced into hair-thin ribbons</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	kecap manis	<b>6 med</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>thinly sliced</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	ground coriander	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	toasted shrimp paste
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	ground turmeric	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	sugar
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	black pepper	<b>4 tbsp</b>	virgin coconut oil
<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>2 tbsp</b>	lime juice <i>freshly squeezed</i>
<b>6 large</b>	shallot <i>peeled and sliced paper-thin</i>		

## PREPARATION

- **Extract only the tender core of the lemongrass.**  
Peel away the tough, fibrous outer layers until you reach the pale, tender inner core of the bottom three inches, discarding the woody tops entirely.
- **Remove the bitter stems from the lime leaves.**  
Fold the leaf in half and rip out the stiff center stem, then stack the halves and slice them into microscopic ribbons to prevent an unpleasantly tough texture.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Marinate the chicken thighs in the wet spice rub.**  
In a medium bowl, combine the chicken thighs, minced garlic, kecap manis, coriander, turmeric, salt, and pepper, tossing until the meat is thoroughly coated.

**1. Massage the sambal aromatics by hand.**

In a heat-proof mixing bowl, combine the paper-thin shallots, lemongrass, lime leaves, chilies, salt, sugar, and shrimp paste, gently squeezing the mixture with your bare hands for thirty seconds to lightly bruise the herbs and release their essential oils.

**2. Shock the sambal with smoking-hot coconut oil.**

Heat the coconut oil in a small skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering and just beginning to smoke, then carefully pour it directly over the massaged sambal to aggressively sizzle and semi-cook the shallots. Stir well to distribute the heat, and mix in the fresh lime juice once the sizzling stops.

**3. Sear the chicken thighs in a hot skillet.**

Heat a large heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat with the neutral oil, then sear the chicken undisturbed for five to six minutes per side until a deeply browned, caramelized crust forms.

**4. Serve the hot seared chicken smothered in the sambal matah.**

Transfer the hot chicken to a platter and generously spoon the resting sambal and its fragrant coconut oil over the top, serving immediately with steaming white jasmine rice.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Use a very sharp knife for the aromatics.**

The texture of the sambal is paramount; thick chunks of lemongrass or raw shallot will ruin the delicate balance of the dish, so take the time to slice everything as paper-thin as possible.

● **Source pre-toasted shrimp paste if possible.**

While raw block terasi requires toasting in a dry pan, pre-toasted shrimp paste powder from an Asian grocer saves time and spares your kitchen the intense smell of roasting fermented shrimp indoors.

- **Substitute smartly for the sweet soy sauce.**

If you cannot find Indonesian kecap manis, simply mix equal parts standard soy sauce and dark brown sugar.



# Ikan Pesmol

*ee-kahn pehs-mohl*

In the lush, river-dense regions of West Java, a fresh catch is transformed by pesmol—a vibrant, sweet-and-sour yellow spice paste that forms the very backbone of Indonesian family cooking. We utilize the exact techniques a Sundanese grandmother would demand: cleaning the fish with lime to kill any muddy river flavor, frying it hard to create a porous crust, and patiently blooming the spices until the oil breaks. Adapted for an American Tuesday night by swapping hard-to-find candlenuts for macadamia nuts, it delivers an uncompromised, velvety sauce that tastes exactly like a ticket straight back home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	whole firm white fish or thick skin-on fillets <i>scored diagonally 3 times on each side</i>	<b>1 med</b>	fresh ginger <i>1-inch piece, peeled</i>
<b>1 med</b>	lime <i>juiced</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	water
<b>2 tsp</b>	kosher salt <i>divided</i>	<b>1 med</b>	lemongrass <i>tough outer layers removed, bruised, and tied into a knot</i>
<b>1/2 cup</b>	neutral oil	<b>1 med</b>	fresh galangal <i>1-inch piece, sliced into thick coins and bruised</i>
<b>6 large</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>4 med</b>	Makrut lime leaves <i>torn slightly to release oils</i>
<b>4 med</b>	garlic cloves <i>peeled</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	water
<b>4 med</b>	unsalted macadamia nuts	<b>1 tbsp</b>	white distilled vinegar
<b>1 med</b>	fresh turmeric <i>1-inch piece, peeled</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	granulated sugar
		<b>10 med</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>left whole</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Properly bruise the aromatics.**

Smacking the lemongrass and galangal with the back of a heavy knife breaks their cellular structure, ensuring their essential oils bleed perfectly into the sauce.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Clean the fish to eliminate the muddy odor known as bau amis.**

Rub the fish inside and out with the lime juice and 1 teaspoon of salt, ensuring the stomach cavity is clear of dark membranes. Let sit for 15 minutes, then pat completely dry with paper towels to prevent aggressive oil splattering.

**1. Fry the fish to build structural integrity.**

Heat about a half-inch of neutral oil in a wide, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat. Fry the fish until the skin is deep golden brown and crispy, about 6 to 8 minutes per side, then remove and drain on a wire rack.

**2. Blend the foundation of the yellow spice paste.**

While the fish fries, combine the shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, turmeric, ginger, and 3 tablespoons of water in a food processor or blender. Blend until it becomes a completely smooth paste.

**3. Bloom the spices until the oil separates, an essential technique known as pecah minyak.**

Discard the frying oil and wipe the skillet clean, then heat 3 tablespoons of fresh oil over medium heat. Pour in the blended paste and cook, stirring constantly, for 5 to 7 minutes until the moisture evaporates, the raw onion smell mellows, and the oil begins to separate and pool at the edges.

**4. Build the vibrant pesmol sauce.**

Toss the bruised lemongrass, galangal, and Makrut lime leaves into the bloomed paste and stir for 1 minute until highly fragrant. Pour in 1 cup of water, the vinegar, sugar, and the remaining 1 teaspoon of salt, bringing the mixture to a rapid simmer.

**5. Braise the fish gently and serve.**

Drop the whole bird's eye chilies into the bubbling sauce, then carefully lower the fried fish into the skillet. Spoon the bright yellow sauce over the fish continuously for 2 to 3 minutes until it absorbs the flavor and the sauce thickens slightly, taking care not to break the fish. Serve immediately with steaming hot jasmine rice.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Leaving the chilies whole is a genius Indonesian culinary trick.**

It infuses the sauce with a sweet, fruity chili aroma without making the dish overly spicy. Diners who want heat can simply smash the chilies into their rice.

- **Macadamia nuts are the perfect weeknight substitute.**

Traditional Indonesian recipes rely on candlenuts (kemiri) for a rich, creamy mouthfeel, but macadamias provide the exact same texture and nutty undertone without requiring a trip to a specialty Asian market.



# Sayur Lodeh

*sah-yoor lo-deh jah-wah*

For a kid growing up in the Indonesian diaspora, the aroma of Sayur Lodeh bubbling on a suburban stove is the undisputed smell of home. This isn't the gentrified, overly sweet coconut soup found in strip-mall fusion joints; it is an agrarian Javanese masterpiece that hinges entirely on the exactitude of its spice paste and a grandmother's brilliant secret—the deep, funky umami of slightly overripe tempeh. It is a profoundly forgiving canvas for whatever vegetables are kicking around your crisper drawer, elevated by an uncompromising, aromatic broth that demands only your patience and a gentle, steady hand.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>5 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 stalk</b>	lemongrass <i>tough outer leaves removed, smashed, and knotted</i>
<b>3</b>	garlic cloves <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	palm sugar
<b>4</b>	macadamia nuts	<b>1 tsp</b>	sea salt
<b>1 tsp</b>	whole coriander seeds <i>lightly toasted</i>	<b>4 oz</b>	tempeh <i>aged at room temperature for 24 to 48 hours</i>
<b>1/2 inch</b>	kencur <i>peeled</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	canned young green jackfruit <i>drained and roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	terasi <i>toasted until fragrant</i>	<b>1/2 med</b>	chayote squash <i>peeled, cored, and cut into matchsticks</i>
<b>1 large</b>	red chili <i>seeds removed</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	green beans <i>cut into 2-inch pieces</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>1 small</b>	Asian eggplant <i>cut into half-moons</i>
<b>2</b>	daun salam	<b>3 cup</b>	chicken stock
<b>1 inch</b>	galangal <i>smashed flat</i>	<b>13 1/2 oz</b>	full-fat coconut milk

## PREPARATION

- **Deliberately age the tempeh.**

To unlock the profound umami of Javanese tempe semangit, leave a standard package of pasteurized tempeh on the counter for one to two days before cooking until it smells intensely earthy and pungent.

- **Toast the shrimp paste.**

Raw terasi is overwhelmingly fishy and must be briefly toasted in a dry skillet over medium heat until it becomes deeply aromatic and crumbles easily.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1. Pulse the foundational bumbu ingredients into a fine paste.**

Combine the shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, toasted coriander, kencur, terasi, and red chili in a small food processor with a splash of water, blending until it reaches a smooth, mustard-colored consistency.

**2. Sauté the spice paste to awaken its deep, fat-soluble flavors.**

Heat the oil in a heavy-bottomed Dutch oven over medium heat and cook the paste for 4 to 5 minutes until the raw onion aroma dissipates and the oil begins to separate slightly, then drop in the smashed galangal, knotted lemongrass, and daun salam for one final minute of stirring.

**3. Build the aromatic base broth with the fermented tempeh.**

Pour in the stock, add the palm sugar, salt, and the aged tempeh, bringing the liquid to a rolling boil so the pungent tempeh begins to break down and release its potent umami.

**4. Sequence the vegetables carefully to avoid boiling them into mush.**

Drop in the hardest ingredients first like the jackfruit, boiling for 5 minutes, followed by the chayote and green beans for 3 minutes, and finally the spongy eggplant before lowering the heat to medium-low.

**5. Incorporate the coconut milk with constant agitation to prevent curdling.**

Pour in the full-fat coconut milk and immediately drop the heat to a gentle simmer, stirring continuously in a slow circle for three minutes so the emulsion holds and the fat never separates into an oily slick.

**6. Adjust the seasoning and serve immediately.**

Taste the rich, creamy broth, adjusting with a final pinch of salt or palm sugar if needed, and serve hot over jasmine rice.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Do not substitute the key botanicals with Western lookalikes.**

Western bay leaves taste like eucalyptus and will utterly ruin the dish; if you cannot find daun salam at your local Asian grocer, simply omit it entirely, and the same absolute rule applies to kencur.

- **Macadamia nuts are the perfect American substitute.**

Traditional candlenuts can be hard to find and must be cooked to neutralize a mild toxin, but macadamia nuts share the exact fat profile and seamlessly yield the same creamy emulsion without the risk.



# Udang Balado

In the lush highlands of West Sumatra, the Minangkabau people created a brilliant, oil-rich chili paste that became Indonesia's most versatile culinary export. This dish is less about complex dry spices and entirely about the elemental transformation of fresh aromatics in hot oil. The secret to recreating this fiery, deeply savory cornerstone of Padang cuisine in an American kitchen relies on a coarse grind, the patience to let the oil separate from the caramelized shallots, and flash-frying the shrimp so they stay perfectly plump. It is a masterpiece of home cooking, unapologetically vibrant and built to be devoured with a mountain of rice.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 lb</b>	large shrimp <i>peeled, deveined, tails left on</i>	<b>1 med</b>	Roma tomato <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh lime juice	<b>1/3 cup</b>	neutral cooking oil
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>4 med</b>	Makrut lime leaves <i>central stems torn out and discarded</i>
<b>6 large</b>	Fresno chilies <i>stemmed and roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 med</b>	lemongrass <i>tough outer leaves removed, bottom smashed</i>
<b>3 med</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>stemmed</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>6 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	granulated sugar
<b>2 small</b>	garlic	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	mushroom bouillon
<b>cloves</b>	<i>peeled</i>		

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Toss the shrimp with the lime juice and a half teaspoon of the salt.**  
Let them sit for ten minutes to firm the flesh and neutralize any muddiness, then pat them completely dry with paper towels.
- 2. Pulse the chilies, shallots, garlic, and tomato in a food processor until finely minced but undeniably textured.**  
Stop well before it becomes a puree; a rustic, coarse grind is the absolute hallmark of an authentic bumbu balado.
- 3. Flash-fry the dried shrimp in the hot oil.**  
Heat the neutral oil in a large wok over medium-high heat, dropping in the shrimp for just under a minute per side until they barely turn pink, then immediately remove them to a plate with a slotted spoon.

**1. Fry the coarse chili paste in the remaining shrimp-infused oil until the oil visibly separates.**

Lower the heat to medium, add the paste, torn lime leaves, and smashed lemongrass, and stir constantly for ten to fifteen minutes until the moisture evaporates, the paste darkens to a brick red, and the clear chili oil pools at the edges.

**2. Season the broken oil and return the shrimp to the wok.**

Stir in the remaining salt, sugar, and mushroom bouillon, then toss the par-cooked shrimp in the fiery paste for one to two minutes until gloriously coated and cooked through.

**3. Remove from the heat immediately and serve.**

Transfer the shrimp and every drop of that stained-glass red oil to a platter alongside a massive mound of steaming jasmine rice.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Do not fear the oil.**

A third of a cup might seem excessive, but the oil is not just a cooking medium. It is the sauce itself, carrying the fat-soluble chili flavors and caramelizing the aromatics.

- **Leave the shells on if you want the absolute authentic flavor.**

Grandma would never peel the shrimp. The shells protect the delicate meat from the intense heat and release deeply savory seafood flavors into the frying oil.

- **Control the heat without losing the flavor.**

The Fresno chilies provide volume and a stunning red color with very little heat, so you can easily adjust or omit the bird's eye chilies entirely depending on who is sitting at your table.



# Ayam Bumbu Bali

*ah-yahm boom-boo bah-lee*

Long before you walked into the kitchen, the sharp, pungent aroma of frying chilies, garlic, and sweet shallots announced exactly what was for dinner. Despite the name, Ayam Bumbu Bali isn't from the island of Bali; it's an East Javanese family staple—a rich, crimson chicken braise swimming in a sweet, spicy, and tangy bumbu merah. Forget the Westernized shortcuts that tell you to boil raw poultry in a simmering liquid. The secret to that authentic, nostalgic texture is a quick par-fry first, creating a firm, caramelized surface for the sticky glaze of kecap manis and tamarind to cling to. We've traded the traditional flat stone

ulekan for a food processor to save your Tuesday night, but we never compromise on cooking the spice paste down until the oil separates, because that is exactly where the magic lives.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>3 lb</b>	bone-in skin-on chicken pieces	<b>1 med</b>	Roma tomato <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh lime juice	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	roasted shrimp paste
<b>2 tsp</b>	kosher salt <i>divided</i>	<b>1 med</b>	fresh galangal <i>1-inch piece, smashed flat</i>
<b>1/2 cup</b>	neutral oil	<b>1 med</b>	lemongrass <i>stalk only, tough outer layers removed, smashed, and knotted</i>
<b>8 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>4 med</b>	makrut lime leaves <i>stems removed</i>
<b>5 med clove</b>	garlic <i>peeled</i>	<b>2 med</b>	Indonesian bay leaves
<b>5 large</b>	mild red chilies <i>stems and seeds removed</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	Kecap Manis
<b>4 small</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>stems removed</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	tamarind paste <i>dissolved in 2 tablespoons warm water</i>
<b>4 med</b>	unsalted macadamia nuts	<b>1 tbsp</b>	dark brown sugar
<b>1 med</b>	fresh ginger <i>1-inch piece, peeled and sliced</i>	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	water

## PREPARATION

- **Wash the chicken to remove the raw poultry scent.**

Place the chicken pieces in a large bowl, massage with the fresh lime juice and one teaspoon of kosher salt, and let sit at room temperature for 10 minutes before patting completely dry with paper towels.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1. Process the aromatics into a smooth red paste.**

In a food processor, combine the shallots, garlic, red chilies, bird's eye chilies, macadamia nuts, ginger, tomato, and shrimp paste with two tablespoons of the neutral oil, processing until the mixture becomes a vibrant, smooth red paste.

**2. Par-fry the chicken in batches to render the fat and firm the skin.**

Heat the remaining oil in a heavy-bottomed Dutch oven over medium-high heat and fry the chicken pieces for 3 to 4 minutes per side so the skin turns golden and structurally sound, then remove to a paper towel-lined plate.

**3. Sauté the spice paste until the harsh raw smell cooks out and the oil separates.**

Pour out all but three tablespoons of oil from the pot, lower the heat to medium-low, and cook the blended paste for 5 to 8 minutes, stirring frequently until the color deepens to a brick red and the oils physically pool at the edges.

**4. Bloom the whole herbs and aromatics in the separated oil.**

Toss in the smashed galangal, knotted lemongrass, makrut lime leaves, and Indonesian bay leaves, stirring for another minute or two until their essential oils release and perfume the kitchen.

**5. Return the chicken to the pot with the braising liquids and simmer covered.**

Add the par-fried chicken back into the pot, pour in the water, and stir in the Kecap Manis, dissolved tamarind, brown sugar, and remaining teaspoon of salt, bringing everything to a gentle boil before reducing the heat to low, covering, and simmering for 20 minutes.

**6. Uncover and reduce the liquid into a thick and glossy glaze.**

Remove the lid, increase the heat slightly to medium, and cook uncovered for another 10 to 15 minutes, stirring occasionally until the liquid reduces by eighty percent and clings beautifully to the meat.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Do not skip the par-fry.**

Boiling raw chicken in a blended sauce results in flabby skin and a cloudy, diluted sauce. Taking eight minutes to fry the chicken first renders the fat out of the skin, stabilizes the structure of the meat, and leaves highly-flavored chicken fat in the pan to fry your spice paste.

- **Master the sweet and sour balance.**

The intense heat of the chilies and savory shallots are balanced by a precise tug-of-war between the molasses-like sweetness of the sweet soy sauce and the fruity acidity of the tamarind. If your finished sauce tastes flat, it simply needs a splash more tamarind or a pinch more sugar to wake it up.

- **Cook the langu out of your paste.**

The single most important skill in Indonesian cooking is sautéing the blended bumbu until the water evaporates, the harsh raw smell vanishes, and the oils physically separate and pool at the edges of the paste.



# Spaghetti Aglio Olio Sambal Matah

In the cafes of Jakarta and Bali, they take the minimalist Italian standard—garlic, oil, pasta—and violently wake it up with Sambal Matah. The secret your grandmother would insist upon is restraint. You do not cook the sambal. The pasta and oil are hot, but the condiment remains raw, crunchy, and entirely uncompromised. It's a masterclass in contrasting temperatures and textures: the pungent funk of toasted shrimp paste, the bright slap of lemongrass, and a gentle bath of warm coconut oil. This is the real deal, pulled straight from an American pantry and onto a weeknight table.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	small shallots <i>peeled and sliced horizontally into very thin rings</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	sugar
<b>8 small</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>thinly sliced</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	unrefined coconut oil <i>warmed until liquid, but not smoking hot</i>
<b>3 med</b>	fresh lemongrass stalks <i>tough outer layers removed, tender bottom 3 inches very finely sliced</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	fresh Key lime juice
<b>6 med</b>	Makrut lime leaves <i>woody center rib removed, stacked and julienned into hair-thin strips</i>	<b>1 lb</b>	dry spaghetti
<b>1 tsp</b>	terasi <i>toasted in a dry pan until highly fragrant and crumbly</i>	<b>1/4 cup</b>	extra virgin olive oil
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	salt	<b>6 med</b>	garlic cloves <i>thinly sliced</i>
		<b>10 oz</b>	tuna packed in oil <i>drained, left in large chunks</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Slice the shallots into full circles.**

Do not dice them. Slicing them horizontally into intact rings preserves their cellular structure, keeping them crunchy when they meet the salt and oil.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Massage the aromatics by hand.**

In a large, heat-proof bowl, combine the shallot rings, chilies, lemongrass, lime leaves, crumbled terasi, salt, and sugar. Put on a clean kitchen glove and gently squeeze and massage the mixture for about a minute. You are bruising the ingredients just enough to force the volatile essential oils to release.

- 2. Bathe the sambal in warm coconut oil.**

Gently heat the coconut oil until it is very warm to the touch, but absolutely not smoking. Pour it over the massaged aromatics, toss to combine, and stir in the lime juice. If the oil is too hot, it will fry the shallots into bitter submission—warm oil acts as a carrier, preserving the crucial raw crunch.

**1. Boil the pasta in heavily salted water.**

Cook the spaghetti in a large pot of boiling, ocean-salty water until just shy of al dente. Reserve one cup of the starchy pasta water before draining.

**2. Build the aglio e olio base.**

Place a large skillet over medium-low heat with the olive oil and sliced garlic.

Cook gently until the garlic turns a pale golden blonde, then add the drained tuna chunks, gently tossing to warm them through without breaking them down to mush.

**3. Emulsify the pasta and oil.**

Transfer the drained spaghetti directly into the skillet with the garlic and tuna.

Add a generous splash of the reserved pasta water and toss vigorously over low heat until the starchy water and oil emulsify into a silky, light sauce.

**4. Marry the pasta and the raw sambal off the heat.**

Remove the skillet entirely from the stove. Pour the reserved Sambal Matah into the hot pasta and toss thoroughly. The residual heat will warm the raw sambal perfectly without cooking it, keeping the alliums crunchy and the lime leaves sharp.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Finding your funk and citrus.**

Terasi (shrimp paste) and Makrut lime leaves can be found at any decent Asian grocer. If terasi is unavailable, a tablespoon of good fish sauce will do the trick in a pinch. If you cannot find Makrut leaves, use a mix of fresh lime and lemon zest, though you'll miss that highly specific, intoxicating floral note.





# Sarapan Pagi: The Morning Fuel

*Savory, uncompromising breakfast recipes that bring the bustling street food culture of Indonesia into the American kitchen.*

In Indonesia, morning doesn't tiptoe in with a delicate pastry and a whisper of coffee. It hits the streets with the roar of two-stroke engines and the unapologetic, deeply savory scent of garlic and shallots frying in hot oil. Breakfast here is serious business. It is fuel. It's a steaming bowl of bubur ayam

from a battered neighborhood cart, or the rich, coconut-laced perfection of nasi uduk wrapped tight in brown paper. It's food built to fortify you for a brutally humid commute and whatever the day decides to throw at you.

Recreating that manic, beautiful street food culture in a quiet American suburb requires a bit of pragmatism, but the soul remains stubbornly intact. These are the uncompromising, heavy-hitting morning meals of the homeland—from peanut-drenched ketoprak to the warming coconut stew of lontong sayur—adapted for weekday time crunches and nostalgic weekend rituals. No apologies, no shortcuts on flavor. Just a straight line back to the kaki lima of home.





# Bubur Ayam Abang-Abang

*boo-boor ah-yam ah-bang ah-bang*

In Indonesia, breakfast isn't cereal; it's a bowl of steaming porridge sold from a wooden cart by a guy who hits a ceramic bowl with a spoon to announce his arrival. The magic of the street cart isn't just the rice, it's the *kuah kuning*, a heavily spiced, golden turmeric chicken broth ladled over the top and buried under a mountain of crispy, salty textures. To pull this off on a random Tuesday in Ohio, we use a brilliant trick from Indonesian grandmas: blitzing yesterday's leftover rice to bypass hours of stirring, getting you that velvety street-cart texture in fifteen minutes flat.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>4 cup</b>	day-old cooked white rice	<b>4 small clove</b>	garlic <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>8 cup</b>	water <i>divided</i>	<b>3 large</b>	macadamia nuts
<b>2 tsp</b>	kosher salt <i>divided</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	ground coriander
<b>2 small</b>	Indonesian bay leaves	<b>1 tsp</b>	ground turmeric
<b>1 lb</b>	bone-in skin-on chicken thighs	<b>1/4 cup</b>	crispy fried shallots
<b>1 tbsp</b>	vegetable oil	<b>1/4 cup</b>	celery leaves <i>finely chopped</i>
<b>1 stalk</b>	lemongrass <i>bruised and tied in a knot</i>	<b>2 med</b>	scallions <i>finely chopped</i>
<b>1 inch</b>	fresh galangal <i>sliced and bruised</i>	<b>1 large</b>	Chinese cruller <i>toasted and snipped into bite-sized pieces</i>
<b>3 med</b>	kaffir lime leaves <i>stems removed and slightly crushed</i>	<b>1/4 cup</b>	roasted unsalted peanuts
<b>1 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder	<b>2 tbsp</b>	sweet soy sauce
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	white pepper	<b>1 cup</b>	shrimp crackers <i>fried</i>
<b>6 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	sambal oelek

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Blend the spice paste until it forms a smooth, mustard-yellow foundation.**  
Toss the shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, coriander, turmeric, and a tablespoon of water into a blender or food processor. Pulse it until completely smooth; the finer the paste, the silkier your broth will be.

**1. Fry the aromatics and build the golden broth.**

Heat the oil in a medium pot over medium heat. Saute your blended spice paste, lemongrass, galangal, and kaffir lime leaves for 3 to 4 minutes until the oil starts to separate and the kitchen smells like a Jakarta morning. Toss in the chicken thighs, coat them in the spices, then pour in 4 cups of water, bouillon, 1 teaspoon of salt, and the white pepper. Simmer covered for 25 minutes.

**2. Blitz the leftover rice into a velvety porridge.**

While the chicken simmers, drop your cold leftover rice, the remaining 4 cups of water, 1 teaspoon of salt, and the bay leaves into a separate pot. Hit it with an immersion blender just four or five times to break about half the grains so they release their starches. Simmer over medium-low heat for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring often, until it transforms into a thick, creamy congee.

**3. Shred the chicken and crisp it in a skillet.**

Pull the cooked thighs from the golden broth, setting them on a board to cool. Keep that broth simmering on low, as this is your prized Kuah Kuning. Discard the bones and skin, shred the meat, and quickly flash-fry the shreds in a lightly oiled skillet for two minutes to crisp the edges like the street vendors do.

**4. Assemble the bowls with architectural precision.**

Ladle a generous base of the thick white porridge into wide bowls. Spoon the hot golden broth directly over the porridge, letting it pool without mixing it in. Top with shredded chicken, a shower of celery leaves, scallions, peanuts, sliced crullers, and fried shallots. Finish with a heavy drizzle of sweet soy sauce, a dollop of sambal, and a handful of crackers on the side.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Do not substitute Western bay leaves for Indonesian daun salam.**

Western bay leaves taste like eucalyptus and will wreck the flavor profile. If you can't find daun salam at your Asian grocer, just leave it out entirely.

- **Macadamia nuts are the ultimate diaspora hack.**

Authentic Kuah Kuning relies on kemiri, or candlenuts, for its creamy texture and oily richness. Macadamia nuts share the exact same fat profile and are easily found in any American supermarket.



# Nasi Uduk Betawi

*nah-see oo-dook beh-tah-wee*

If you grew up in an Indonesian household, you know the smell of Nasi Uduk. It's the ultimate weekend wake-up call, born centuries ago from a beautiful collision of Malay and Javanese cultures in the chaotic, sprawling port of Jakarta. This isn't just basic coconut rice. It's a profoundly savory beast, steeped in earthy Indonesian bay leaves, floral pandan, sharp galangal, and rich coconut fat. While the old grandmothers stood over open flames performing a back-breaking two-step boil and steam, modern aunties trust the electric rice cooker. The real secret isn't the machine—it's the bumbu rahasia, a quick sauté

of shallots, garlic, and coriander before everything hits the pot. That extra five minutes is the difference between a decent food-blog recipe and the explosive, nostalgic, exact flavor of home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 1/4 cup</b>	Jasmine rice <i>washed thoroughly until water runs clear and drained well</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	sugar
<b>1 cup</b>	canned full-fat coconut milk <i>shaken well</i>	<b>3 large</b>	daun salam
<b>2 cup</b>	water	<b>2 large</b>	pandan leaves <i>washed and tied into a tight knot</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>2 med</b>	lemongrass stalks <i>tough outer layers removed, bottom third smashed flat, and tied into a knot</i>
<b>2 med</b>	shallots <i>peeled and finely minced</i>	<b>1 oz</b>	galangal <i>sliced into thin coins and bruised</i>
<b>2 clove</b>	garlic <i>peeled and finely minced</i>	<b>1 oz</b>	fresh ginger <i>sliced into thin coins and bruised</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	ground coriander	<b>2 tbsp</b>	crispy fried shallots
<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	sea salt		

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Sauté the secret spices to build the flavor base.

Place a small skillet over medium heat and add the neutral oil. Sauté the minced shallots and garlic for 2 to 3 minutes until they are softened and highly fragrant, but not browned. Stir in the ground coriander, salt, and sugar, cooking for 30 seconds to toast the spices, then remove from the heat.

### 2. Assemble the rice cooker.

Transfer your washed, drained Jasmine rice into the insert pot of your electric rice cooker. Scrape every last bit of the sautéed shallot and garlic mixture into the rice.

**1. Add the aromatics and liquids.**

Bury the daun salam, knotted pandan leaves, smashed lemongrass, galangal, and ginger into the rice. Pour in the full-fat coconut milk and the water, gently stirring the mixture just enough to distribute the salt, spices, and coconut milk evenly without over-mixing.

**2. Cook the rice and perform the critical fluff.**

Close the lid and press the standard White Rice button. The absolute most critical step happens the moment the rice cooker clicks to Warm—open the lid immediately, take a plastic rice paddle, and gently fold the rice from the bottom up to evenly distribute the rich coconut fats that have pooled at the surface.

**3. Rest the rice to achieve the perfect texture.**

Close the lid again and let the rice rest on the Warm setting for 10 to 15 minutes. This allows the starch to set and absorbs remaining surface moisture, ensuring the rice is distinct and fluffy, not mushy. Pick out the woody aromatics before serving hot with a generous shower of crispy fried shallots.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The Daun Salam is non-negotiable.**

Do not substitute Western bay leaves for daun salam. They have entirely different flavor profiles. If you absolutely cannot find it in the frozen or dried section of your Asian grocer, omit it, but know you'll be missing a core earthy note of Jakarta.

● **Respect the coconut fat.**

Never use lite coconut milk or the stuff sold in cartons for cereal. You need the thick lipid layer from canned full-fat coconut milk to enrobe the grains and prevent gelatinous clumping.



# Ketoprak Jakarta

The soul of a Jakarta morning isn't found in a jar of commercial peanut butter. It lives on the street, in the rhythmic thwack of a vendor crushing raw garlic and fried peanuts directly onto a porcelain plate. This recipe rejects gentrified shortcuts to deliver the fiercely pungent street cart experience for an American kitchen. We trade the vendor's mortar and pestle for a food processor, but keep the explosive, minute-by-minute plate assembly exactly as it should be.

## INGREDIENTS

**14 oz** firm tofu  
*drained and patted dry*

**1 tsp** kosher salt  
*divided*

**3 large** garlic cloves  
*1 smashed, 2 peeled*

**3 oz** rice vermicelli

<b>2 cup</b>	mung bean sprouts <i>rinsed</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	warm water <i>divided</i>
<b>1 large</b>	instant boil-in-bag rice cakes <i>cooked according to package and cubed</i>	<b>4 tbsp</b>	sweet soy sauce
<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>2 large</b>	eggs <i>hard-boiled and halved</i>
<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	roasted unsalted peanuts	<b>1/2 med</b>	English cucumber <i>thinly sliced</i>
<b>3 med</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>stems removed</i>	<b>1/4 cup</b>	fried shallots
<b>2 tbsp</b>	palm sugar <i>finely chopped</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	tapioca crackers <i>fried</i>
<b>3 tbsp</b>	tamarind water		

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Soak the vermicelli in hot water for 5 minutes, drain, and rinse with cold water.**  
Drop the bean sprouts into boiling water for exactly 30 seconds to remove their raw starchiness, then drain immediately alongside the noodles.
- 2. Fry the tofu until a golden, wrinkled crust forms.**  
Cut the tofu into large blocks, briefly dip them into a mixture of 1/2 cup warm water, 1/2 tsp salt, and the smashed garlic clove, then fry in a skillet over medium-high heat with neutral oil until chewy outside and soft inside before cutting into bite-sized cubes.
- 3. Pulse the roasted peanuts in a food processor until they resemble coarse, wet sand.**  
Do not over-process them into a smooth butter; the rustic, slightly gritty texture is the crucial backbone of the dish.
- 4. Grind the peeled garlic, chilies, palm sugar, and remaining salt into a rough paste.**  
Use a pestle or the back of a heavy wooden spoon in a mixing bowl to crush the aromatics, then vigorously stir in the processed peanuts, tamarind water, and remaining warm water until the sauce is thick and velvety.

1. **Divide the cubed rice cakes, fried tofu, blanched sprouts, and vermicelli between two wide bowls.**

Ketoprak is always assembled per portion on the plate, never tossed together beforehand in a large mixing bowl.

2. **Ladle the peanut sauce generously over the mounds of ingredients and drizzle with sweet soy sauce.**

Garnish heavily with the sliced cucumber, boiled eggs, an unapologetic handful of fried shallots, and a mountain of crispy tapioca crackers.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **The rice cake hack replicates the dense texture of traditional lontong using everyday pantry staples.**

If you cannot find instant boil-in-bag rice cakes, cook 1 cup of jasmine rice with 1 1/2 cup of water until very soft, aggressively press it into a rectangular container while still hot, cool in the fridge until firm, and slice into cubes.

- **Tame the allicin punch if serving on a weeknight.**

The defining characteristic of Betawi Ketoprak is the sharp bite of raw garlic, but if you have a morning meeting, blanch the peeled cloves in boiling water for 60 seconds before crushing them to mute the intensity.



# Nasi Goreng Gila

*nah-see go-reng gee-lah*

In Indonesia, breakfast isn't a delicate affair. It's an act of beautiful, chaotic resourcefulness. Born on the humid streets of Jakarta's Menteng district, "crazy" fried rice is a glorious, unapologetic scramble of day-old rice, bright pink hotdogs, bouncy beef meatballs, and whatever greens are kicking around, all bound in a sticky, caramelized soy glaze. Don't let the hotdogs fool you into thinking this is some watered-down Americanized shortcut. That is exactly how the 'abang-abang' street cart vendors do it back home. It's fast, it clears out the fridge, and it tastes exactly like nostalgia on a Tuesday morning.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>4 cup</b>	long-grain white rice <i>cooked, cold, and day-old</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	white pepper
<b>3 med</b>	skinless hotdogs <i>sliced diagonally into thin ovals</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	toasted shrimp paste
<b>6 med</b>	frozen Asian beef meatballs <i>thawed and sliced thinly</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil <i>divided</i>
<b>1 cup</b>	cooked chicken <i>shredded</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	kecap manis
<b>3 large</b>	eggs <i>lightly beaten</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	oyster sauce
<b>2 cup</b>	green cabbage <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	ketchup
<b>1 cup</b>	choy sum <i>chopped</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	sambal oelek
<b>4 med</b>	shallots <i>peeled</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	fish sauce
<b>4 med</b>	garlic <i>peeled</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder
<b>1 clove</b>		<b>2 tbsp</b>	crispy fried shallots
<b>2 med</b>	macadamia nuts	<b>1 med</b>	cucumber <i>sliced</i>
		<b>1 med</b>	tomato <i>sliced</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Cook the rice a day in advance.**

The rice must be cold and straight from the fridge so the grains don't turn to mush when they hit the heavy sauce matrix in the wok.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Blend the aromatic soul of the dish.**

Throw your shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, white pepper, shrimp paste, and two tablespoons of the oil into a small food processor and blitz until it forms a smooth, fragrant paste.

**1. Scramble the eggs and get them out.**

Place your largest wok or heavy skillet over medium-high heat with a splash of oil, pour in the beaten eggs, scramble them rapidly until just set, and remove them to a plate immediately so they don't overcook.

**2. Fry the paste until the oil separates.**

Wipe the wok clean, add another small splash of oil, crank the heat to high, and scrape the paste into the hot pan, stirring vigorously for a minute or two until it deepens in color and the oil starts to separate from the solids.

**3. Brown the meats in the aromatics.**

Toss in your sliced hotdogs, meatballs, and shredded chicken, stir-frying for a few minutes to let the meats brown and soak up all that incredible paste.

**4. Caramelize the sauce matrix against the hot wok.**

Throw in the cabbage and choy sum, then immediately pour the kecap manis, oyster sauce, ketchup, sambal, fish sauce, and bouillon directly over the meats and veggies, letting the sauces bubble and caramelize against the hot metal for fifteen seconds.

**5. Toss in the rice and work fast.**

Dump in the cold, day-old rice and the cooked eggs, working quickly with your spatula to chop up any clumps and tossing everything from the bottom up until every single grain is coated in the dark, glossy sauce.

**6. Garnish and serve it street-style.**

Dish it out steaming hot, top generously with crispy fried shallots, and serve with cooling slices of cucumber and tomato on the side.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Embrace the hotdogs.**

Don't substitute artisanal sausage here; standard pink hotdogs are the culturally accurate, undisputed king of Indonesian street food carts.

- **Respect the Kecap Manis.**

This thick, syrupy sweet soy sauce does most of the heavy lifting for the dish's flavor and color, so do not substitute it with regular soy sauce or the dish will be ruined by excessive saltiness.

- **Macadamia nuts mimic candlenuts.**

Candlenuts are traditional but hard to find in the States; macadamia nuts offer the exact same rich, texturizing fat content without the hunt.



# Tahu Telur Surabaya

Growing up in the diaspora, weekend mornings smelled of something sputtering violently in hot oil, followed by the deep, dark, mesmerizing aroma of roasted peanuts and sweet soy sauce. Tahu Telur—literally "Tofu Egg"—is a street food legend from Surabaya that elevates humble plant proteins into a towering, lacy masterpiece. Restaurants often try to sanitize it with metal ring molds and basic Thai peanut sauce, but grandma knew better: the secret to an incredible, fluffy structure is just a spoonful of starch and the bravery to use hot oil. With a quick pantry shortcut and a clever hack for the elusive sweet black shrimp paste, you can pull off this East Javanese powerhouse on a busy Tuesday night in Ohio, and it will taste exactly like home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>14 oz</b>	firm tofu <i>drained, patted very dry, and cut into 1/2-inch cubes</i>	<b>3 small</b>	bird's eye chilies
<b>4 large</b>	eggs	<b>2 tbsp</b>	petis udang
<b>1 tbsp</b>	tapioca starch	<b>4 tbsp</b>	kecap manis
<b>2 tbsp</b>	water	<b>1 tbsp</b>	tamarind paste
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	ground white pepper	<b>1 tsp</b>	dark brown sugar
<b>1 med</b>	green onion <i>finely chopped</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	hot water
<b>1/2 cup</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	fresh bean sprouts
<b>1/2 cup</b>	natural unsweetened chunky peanut butter	<b>1/2 med</b>	English cucumber <i>cut into small cubes</i>
<b>2 med</b>	garlic cloves <i>peeled</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	Chinese celery leaves <i>roughly chopped</i>
		<b>3 tbsp</b>	crispy fried shallots

## PREPARATION

- **Gather your mis en place.**

This omelette fries rapidly. Ensure your vegetables are chopped and your cooking space is organized before the egg hits the hot oil.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Blanch the bean sprouts.**

Place the bean sprouts in a colander in the sink. Pour a kettle of boiling water over them to quickly remove the raw, grassy flavor, then immediately rinse with cold water and drain well.

**1. Blend the aromatic peanut and petis sauce.**

In a food processor, pulse the garlic and chilies until minced. Transfer the mixture to a small saucepan over medium-low heat along with the peanut butter, petis udang, kecap manis, tamarind paste, salt, and brown sugar. Pour in the hot water and stir vigorously to combine. Let it simmer gently for 2 to 3 minutes until it thickens into a glossy, dark, pourable sauce.

**2. Whisk the egg and tofu batter.**

In a large bowl, whisk the eggs vigorously with the tapioca starch, 2 tablespoons of water, salt, white pepper, and green onions until frothy. The air bubbles and starch are what give the omelette its signature lift. Gently fold in the cubed tofu so every piece is coated.

**3. Fry the omelette over high heat.**

Heat the neutral oil in a non-stick skillet or wok over medium-high heat until a drop of egg sizzles and puffs immediately. Carefully ladle half of the tofu-egg mixture into the center of the pan. Let it fry undisturbed for 2 to 3 minutes until the bottom is deeply golden and lacy. Carefully flip using two spatulas and fry for another 2 minutes before transferring to a paper-towel-lined plate. Repeat with the remaining batter.

**4. Assemble the tower.**

Place the warm omelette on a serving plate. Top generously with the blanched bean sprouts and cucumber, spoon the warm sauce over the top, and garnish heavily with celery leaves and crispy fried shallots.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The Petis Hack**

If you cannot find authentic black shrimp paste (petis udang or hei ko), do not use standard shrimp paste straight. Mash 1 teaspoon of standard shrimp paste with 1 tablespoon of dark baking molasses and 1 teaspoon of dark brown sugar to perfectly mimic the sweet, fermented depth of East Javanese petis.

- **The Fluff Factor**

Resist the urge to use less oil to make the dish healthier. Tahu Telur requires shallow-frying in hot oil to activate the tapioca starch and create the steam bubbles that push the egg upward.

- **Vegan Petis Alternative**

Use 1 tablespoon of dark red miso paste mixed with an extra tablespoon of kecap manis. It provides the necessary fermented umami hit without any seafood.



# Nasi Kuning Magic Cooker

To a kid growing up in the diaspora, the smell of coconut, lemongrass, and turmeric bubbling away was the ultimate alarm clock. Back in Indonesia, this golden rice is the quintessential morning fuel, sold in little paper cones at local street stalls. Traditionally a labor of love over a tiered bamboo steamer, modern Indonesian grandmothers long ago hacked the electric rice cooker to do the heavy lifting. This is that canonical, authentic flavor of home, streamlined for your busy life without sacrificing an ounce of soul.

## INGREDIENTS

**2 cup** Jasmine rice  
*washed thoroughly*

**1 cup** full-fat canned coconut milk  
*shaken well*

**1 cup** water

<b>1/2 tsp</b>	fresh lime juice	<b>3 med</b>	Makrut lime leaves <i>slightly torn at the edges</i>
<b>2 large</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 med</b>	pandan leaf <i>tied into a knot</i>
<b>3 med clove</b>	garlic <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>2 med</b>	Indonesian bay leaves
<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	ground turmeric	<b>2 large</b>	eggs <i>beaten, fried into a thin crepe, and sliced into ribbons</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>1 med</b>	cucumber <i>sliced</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	salt	<b>1 med</b>	tomato <i>sliced</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder	<b>2 tbsp</b>	crispy fried shallots
<b>1 med</b>	fresh lemongrass <i>top half removed, bottom bulb heavily bruised</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	sambal

## PREPARATION

- **Wash the rice until the water runs mostly clear.**

Run cold water over the rice in the cooker bowl, swishing gently, and drain. Repeat three to four times. Removing the surface starch is what keeps the final dish fluffy instead of turning into a gelatinous paste.

- **Blend the foundation paste.**

In a small processor, combine the shallots, garlic, turmeric, salt, and bouillon.

Blend into a smooth paste, adding the cooking oil if the blades need help catching.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Sauté the spice paste to kill the raw bite.**

Place a small skillet over medium heat, add the paste, and stir constantly for three to five minutes until the raw garlic smell mellows and the oil begins to separate.

Dumping raw aromatics straight into a rice cooker is a rookie mistake that yields a harsh, boiled flavor.

**1. Infuse the golden broth.**

Toss the bruised lemongrass, Makrut lime leaves, knotted pandan, and Indonesian bay leaves into the skillet. Stir for thirty seconds, drop the heat to low, and pour in the coconut milk and water. Let it barely reach a simmer, then immediately kill the heat.

**2. Marry the rice and broth in the cooker.**

Pour the warm, fragrant broth over the washed rice in your machine. Add the lime juice, give it one gentle stir so the rice sits evenly, close the lid, and press cook.

**3. Respect the resting phase.**

When the machine clicks to warm, do not open it. Let it sit undisturbed for ten to fifteen minutes so the starches firm up and the residual steam distributes evenly.

**4. Fluff the rice and build the plate.**

Open the lid, discard the tough leaves and lemongrass, and gently fold the rice from the bottom up to redistribute the rich coconut fat. Serve with shredded omelet ribbons, fresh cucumber, crispy shallots, and a hefty spoonful of sambal.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Never substitute Western bay leaves for Daun Salam.**

American and Mediterranean bay leaves taste like pine and eucalyptus, which will completely ruin the dish. Find Indonesian Daun Salam frozen at your local Asian grocer, or skip it entirely.

● **Trust the ratio, not the machine.**

Coconut milk is thicker than water, and a sealed cooker prevents evaporation. Stick to a strict one-to-one ratio of rice to total liquid, or you'll end up with mush.

● **The lime juice is a quiet workhorse.**

You won't taste it, but a few drops of acidity naturally brighten the turmeric's yellow pigment and act as a natural preservative if the rice sits on warm all morning.



# Jajanan SD: After-School Nostalgia

*Deeply nostalgic afternoon street snacks from childhood, translated for standard American kitchen equipment.*

There is a universal truth to Indonesian childhood: the best food isn't found at a dining table, it's hawked from a battered cart idling just past the school gates. Jajanan SD is the taste of a crumpled Rupiah note traded for pure, chaotic joy—hot grease, MSG, and aggressively sweet condensed milk. It's the afternoon rush distilled into a paper cone of spicy macaroni or a sketchy, glorious skewer of rolled egg.

You don't need the specialized brass molds of a Jakarta street vendor to chase that high. A trusty cast-iron skillet and a standard muffin tin will do the heavy lifting here. These recipes aren't about precious culinary reverence. They're about getting that thick, buttery chew of martabak manis or the nostalgic, half-baked bite of kue cubit into your own kitchen, by any means necessary.





# Kue Cubit

*koo-eh choo-bit*

For a first-generation kid, the smell of these tiny, vanilla-laced hotcakes instantly transports them to the chaotic crush of students swarming the street food carts after the final school bell. Known as Jajanan SD, these "pinch cakes" are best ordered setengah matang—half-baked with a warm, molten center. To pull off this street-side alchemy in an American kitchen, skip the electric mixer, grab a Japanese takoyaki pan, and insist on real chocolate sprinkles that will actually melt into the hot batter.

## INGREDIENTS

**1 cup** all-purpose flour

**1/2 cup** granulated sugar

**1/2 tsp**      baking powder

**1/4 tsp**      baking soda

**1/4 tsp**      kosher salt

**2 large**      eggs  
*room temperature*

**1/2 cup**      whole milk

**4 tbsp**      unsalted butter  
*melted and slightly cooled*

**1 tsp**      pure vanilla extract

**1/2 cup**      Indonesian Ceres chocolate  
sprinkles or Dutch hagelslag

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1. Whisk the eggs and sugar by hand until pale and frothy.**

Vigorously whisk for about two minutes until the sugar is mostly dissolved; street vendors rely on elbow grease, not electric mixers.

**2. Sift and fold the dry ingredients.**

Place a fine-mesh sieve over the bowl, sift in the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt, then gently fold until just combined.

**3. Incorporate the wet ingredients to form a cohesive batter.**

Pour in the milk and vanilla, whisking gently until lump-free, then stir in the melted butter until glossy.

**4. Let the batter rest at room temperature for thirty minutes.**

This mandatory grandma's secret allows the flour to hydrate and the leavening to activate, yielding a fluffy crumb that mirrors the long-standing batters of the street carts.

**5. Preheat the pan over the lowest possible heat.**

Heat a takoyaki or aebleskiver pan over medium-low, then drop it to low and lightly brush each cavity with melted butter.

**6. Fill each cavity three-quarters of the way full.**

Transfer the batter to a liquid measuring cup for easy pouring; the cakes will rise significantly as they cook.

**1. Cook until the edges set for a half-baked center.**

For the classic setengah matang style, cook uncovered for about two minutes until the bottom is golden brown but the top remains wet and bubbly.

**2. Top with chocolate sprinkles and pinch them from the pan.**

Generously scatter the real chocolate sprinkles over the molten tops, use a wooden skewer to lift them out, and eat immediately.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The pan matters.**

The traditional Indonesian cast-iron mold is hard to find, but a Danish aebleskiver or Japanese takoyaki pan perfectly replicates the street cart griddle.

● **Accept no substitute for real chocolate sprinkles.**

American birthday sprinkles are made of wax and won't melt. You must use authentic Indonesian Ceres or high-quality Dutch hagelslag for the genuine, gooey experience.

● **Use pasteurized eggs for the half-baked version.**

Since the setengah matang style leaves the center essentially raw, home cooks should consider using pasteurized eggs and heat-treated flour for safety.

● **Cheese is a perfectly authentic alternative.**

If you prefer the sweet-and-savory flavor profile popular in Indonesia, substitute the chocolate with a generous pinch of grated processed cheddar cheese.



# Telur Gulung

*teh-loor goo-loong*

If you grew up visiting family in Indonesia, or heard legends of the snacks sold outside elementary school gates, Telur Gulung is the holy grail. It isn't an omelet—it's a miracle of street-food engineering. A savory, deep-fried web of egg spun tightly around a bamboo skewer. The vendors knew the secret was cutting the egg with water and starch, then flashing it in smoking hot oil. Forget the flat skillet. Grab a squeeze bottle, heat up the wok, and bring the glorious, chaotic flavor of the homeland into your own kitchen.

## INGREDIENTS

**3 large** eggs  
*room temperature*

**1/2 cup** filtered water

<b>1 tbsp</b>	tapioca starch	<b>3 cup</b>	neutral cooking oil
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder	<b>3 tbsp</b>	Indonesian Saus Sambal
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	fine sea salt	<b>1 tbsp</b>	Kecap Manis
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	white pepper	<b>1/2 cup</b>	water

## PREPARATION

- **Rough up the bamboo skewers.**

If using smooth American bamboo skewers, carefully make a few small notches near the bottom with a paring knife so the egg has teeth to grip.

- **Prepare the squeeze bottle.**

Wash out an old ketchup or sriracha bottle; this vendor trick is non-negotiable for dispensing the thin egg web.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Simmer the vendor dipping sauce.**

In a small saucepan, whisk the Saus Sambal, Kecap Manis, and a half cup of water over medium heat for 2 minutes until it forms a thin, watery sauce, then set aside in a dipping cup.

- 2. Mix the fail-proof batter.**

In a bowl, fully dissolve the tapioca starch in a half cup of filtered water to prevent lumps. Crack in the eggs, add the bouillon, salt, and white pepper, and beat vigorously for 1 to 2 minutes until watery and highly frothy.

- 3. Transfer the batter to a squeeze bottle.**

Pour the frothy egg mixture into your clean squeeze bottle to ensure a steady, thin stream when frying.

- 4. Preheat a deep pool of oil in a wok.**

Place a concave wok over medium heat with at least two inches of neutral oil in the center, heating it to 350°F. Test with a drop of batter; it should instantly sizzle and puff up.

**1. Spin and roll the egg.**

Holding the squeeze bottle 6 to 8 inches above the wok, release a steady stream of batter in a circular motion. Immediately dip a prepared bamboo skewer into the sizzling web and twirl it rapidly between your fingers to spool the egg.

**2. Press out the oil and serve immediately.**

Drag the spooled egg up the sloped side of the wok, pressing gently to squeeze out excess oil and seal the roll to the stick. Drain briefly and serve piping hot with the thin chili sauce.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Use a concave wok, not a flat skillet.**

A flat pan spreads the batter too thinly, causing it to fry like a pancake instead of a suspended, lacy web.

● **Do not skip the watery sauce.**

The thinness is by design, mimicking the cheap, watered-down vendor sauces that soak perfectly into the fluffy, fibrous egg.

● **Adjust for texture.**

If the egg clumps heavily, add a splash more water and pour from higher up; if it breaks and won't roll, make sure the oil is hot and the starch hasn't settled in the bottle.



# Martabak Manis / Terang Bulan

*mar-tah-bahk mah-nees*

If you grew up in an Indonesian household, the smell of melting butter, toasting batter, and sweetened condensed milk triggers an immediate Pavlovian response. The undisputed king of Indonesian street snacks, this impossibly rich stuffed pancake owes its signature bouncy, honeycomb texture not to a vendor's massive cast-iron wheel, but to the exact chemistry of the batter. By resting the dough to relax the gluten and hitting it with a baking soda slurry right before it hits a hot non-stick skillet, you can perfectly recreate the nostalgic street cart experience on a busy weeknight.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 3/4 cup</b>	unbleached all-purpose flour	<b>3 tbsp</b>	water
<b>2 tbsp</b>	tapioca starch	<b>1 tbsp</b>	granulated sugar
<b>3 tbsp</b>	granulated sugar	<b>3 tbsp</b>	European cultured butter <i>softened to room temp</i>
<b>1 cup</b>	water <i>brought to room temp</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	mild cheddar cheese <i>grated</i>
<b>1 large</b>	egg	<b>1/2 cup</b>	Dutch chocolate sprinkles
<b>3/4 tsp</b>	baking powder	<b>1/4 cup</b>	unsalted roasted peanuts <i>crushed</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	vanilla extract	<b>1/4 cup</b>	sweetened condensed milk
<b>3/4 tsp</b>	baking soda		

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Whisk the flour, tapioca starch, three tablespoons of sugar, and one cup of water into a smooth paste.**

Add the egg, baking powder, and vanilla extract, mixing gently just until combined without overworking the gluten.

- 2. Rest the batter for at least one hour at room temperature or up to twelve hours in the refrigerator.**

This autolyse phase is non-negotiable; it relaxes the gluten to create the authentic dense, chewy texture rather than a fluffy American pancake.

- 3. Preheat a heavy-bottomed ten or twelve-inch non-stick skillet over medium-low heat for five minutes.**

The pan must be evenly hot; test it by flicking a drop of water, which should sizzle and evaporate immediately.

- 4. Mix the baking soda with three tablespoons of water and gently fold this slurry into the rested batter.**

Do this exactly when you are ready to cook, as the chemical reaction needs to happen upon hitting the hot pan.

- 1. Pour the batter into the hot skillet and immediately push some batter up the sides to create a crispy edge.**

You can do this by swirling the pan by its handle or using the back of a ladle to form the beloved paper-thin pinggiran.

- 2. Leave the pan uncovered on medium-low heat until the surface is completely covered in bursting bubbles.**

This usually takes about four to six minutes.

- 3. Sprinkle the remaining tablespoon of sugar evenly across the top to break the surface tension and lock in the vertical honeycomb tunnels.**

Once the sugar is applied, cover the pan with a tight-fitting lid, reduce the heat to the absolute lowest setting, and steam for three to five minutes until the top is opaque and springs back to the touch.

- 4. Transfer the hot pancake to a cutting board, slather generously with the cultured butter, and slice cleanly down the middle.**

- 5. Layer the grated cheddar, chocolate sprinkles, and crushed peanuts on one half, then drizzle aggressively with sweetened condensed milk.**

Do not skip the cheese; the salty umami contrast against the chocolate is the defining characteristic of authentic martabak.

- 6. Fold the un-topped half over the fillings to create a massive semi-circle, brush the top crust with more butter, and chop into bite-sized squares.**

Serve immediately while the chocolate is melted, the cheese is warm, and the crust is still crispy.



## Makaroni Pedas

Outside the school gates in Jakarta, itinerant street vendors peddle the holiest of after-school grails: Makaroni Pedas. Served in tiny, crinkling plastic bags, it is unapologetically coated in neon-red MSG dust and utterly perfect. Authentic carts use a specialized raw pasta that fries up dense and crunchy, but standard American elbows will shatter your teeth if treated the same way. The trick is to boil them first, dust them in cornstarch, and drop them in hot oil to recreate that exact, glorious glass-like street-cart crunch. Tossed in a garlic and kaffir lime oil, then hit with a pulverized spice mix that perfectly mimics the motherland's iconic flavor profile, this is the real, uncompromising taste of an Indonesian childhood.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 tbsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder	<b>4 small</b>	garlic
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	MSG	<b>clove</b>	<i>minced very finely</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	fine sea salt	<b>6 med</b>	Kaffir lime leaves
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	white pepper	<b>leaf</b>	<i>center rib removed, sliced into hair-thin strips</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	powdered sugar	<b>8 oz</b>	dried elbow macaroni
<b>1 tbsp</b>	cayenne pepper	<b>1 tbsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>4 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>2 tbsp</b>	cornstarch
		<b>1 qt</b>	neutral cooking oil <i>for deep frying</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Grind the savory dust.**

In a mortar and pestle or spice grinder, pulverize the bouillon, MSG, sea salt, white pepper, powdered sugar, and cayenne into a fine, uniform powder so it will cling to the dry pasta.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Create the aromatic flavor engine.**

In a small skillet, heat the four tablespoons of neutral oil over medium-low heat, gently frying the minced garlic and lime leaves for 3 to 4 minutes until the garlic is lightly golden and the leaves crisp, then transfer immediately to a heat-proof bowl.

- 2. Boil the macaroni to a strict al dente.**

Cook the elbow macaroni in generously salted boiling water according to package directions, taking care not to overcook it so it holds its shape during frying.

**1. Choose your nostalgia between the chewy and the crispy path.**

For the warm, chewy version (Makaroni Basah), skip the deep fryer entirely and simply toss the warm, drained pasta in a skillet with two tablespoons of the aromatic oil and your savory dust. For the shatter-crisp version (Makaroni Kering), proceed to the next step.

**2. Dry and coat the boiled pasta.**

Rinse the macaroni under cold water, pat it completely dry with paper towels to avoid violent splattering, and toss it with the cornstarch until every noodle has a thin, powdery coating.

**3. Fry the pasta chips in hot oil.**

Working in batches, carefully lower the coated macaroni into 350°F oil and fry for five to seven minutes until the bubbling subsides and the pasta turns deep golden brown, then drain on a wire rack.

**4. Toss with the seasoned dust and serve.**

While the fried macaroni is still warm, drizzle with the remaining aromatic oil and toss vigorously with the pulverized spice powder until the snack is heavily coated in neon-red perfection.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Understanding the gelatinization trick.**

Standard American pasta will shatter your teeth if fried raw. Boiling it first gelatinizes the starches, and the cornstarch coating ensures a brilliant, light crunch that mimics the specialized Makaroni Bantat used by Indonesian street vendors.

● **Respect the umami.**

MSG is the undisputed soul of Jajanan SD snacks; do not skip it. Ensure your spice mix is ground to an absolute dust so it clings to the dry pasta rather than bouncing off to the bottom of the bowl.

- **There is no substitute for kaffir lime leaves.**

These leaves provide a deeply aromatic, citrus-floral note that defines Indonesian snacking. Do not substitute regular lime zest, as the high heat of the oil will turn it incredibly bitter. Simply omit them if they are unavailable.



# Cilor

*chee-lor*

If you ask a first-generation Indonesian kid about the greatest food they ate growing up, they won't point you to a lavish banquet. They'll tell you about the abang-abang—the street vendors parked outside the elementary school gates, slinging skewers of chewy tapioca fried in a sizzling, lacy web of beaten egg. Cilor is honest, unapologetic comfort food, demanding nothing more than cheap pantry staples and a little respect for the alchemy of boiling water and starch. It's a direct line to the chaotic, intoxicating magic of a West Javanese afternoon, scaled down for a Tuesday night in the American suburbs. No shortcuts on flavor, just the real deal.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 cup</b>	tapioca flour <i>do not substitute with cornstarch or potato starch</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	water <i>at a violent, rolling boil</i>
<b>1/2 cup</b>	all-purpose flour	<b>2 large</b>	large eggs
<b>3 med cloves</b>	garlic <i>grated into a fine paste</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	water
<b>1 med</b>	scallion <i>green parts only, finely minced</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	ground white pepper
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1/4 cup</b>	neutral oil <i>for pan-frying</i>
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	ground white pepper	<b>2 tbsp</b>	kecap manis <i>for serving</i>
		<b>2 tbsp</b>	sambal or sriracha <i>for serving</i>

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Whisk together the dry dough base.

In a medium heat-proof bowl, combine the tapioca flour, all-purpose flour, grated garlic, scallion, bouillon powder, 1/2 tsp salt, and 1/4 tsp white pepper, ensuring the garlic is evenly distributed.

### 2. Hydrate the flour with violently boiling water.

Pour the rolling boiling water over the flour and immediately stir with a sturdy spatula; the intense heat is non-negotiable, gelatinizing the starches so they bind together instead of dissolving into a crumbly mess.

### 3. Knead into a smooth, pliable dough.

As soon as it's cool enough to handle, get in there with your hands and knead until the dough cleans the sides of the bowl, adding a teaspoon of boiling water if it feels too dry.

### 4. Shape the dough into small marbles.

Pinch off pieces of the dough and roll them between your palms to create half-inch balls, yielding around forty to fifty pieces.

**1. Boil until they float.**

Drop the tapioca balls into a pot of boiling water, give them a gentle stir so they don't stick, and let them cook for 5 to 7 minutes until they rise to the surface, fully cooked and bouncy.

**2. Skewer the cooked tapioca.**

Use a slotted spoon to drain the balls, let them cool slightly, then thread three to four of them onto short bamboo skewers.

**3. Whisk the egg wash.**

In a shallow dish wide enough to fit your skewers, vigorously beat the eggs with a tablespoon of water, 1/4 tsp salt, and 1/4 tsp white pepper until very loose and frothy.

**4. Fry in the lacy egg web.**

Heat a shallow layer of neutral oil in a wide skillet over medium-high heat, dunk the skewers in the egg wash, and fry for 1 to 2 minutes per side, spooning extra egg over the top to create crispy, delicious tendrils.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Respect the boiling water rule.**

If there is one trick to master in Sundanese cooking, it's handling the tapioca. Your water must be at a bubbling, rolling boil when it hits the flour to instantly cook the starches; hot tap water will fail you entirely.

● **The weeknight pan-scramble hack.**

Don't have time to thread fifty little dough balls onto sticks? Flatten the dough, cut it into half-inch squares, boil them, and throw them straight into the skillet. Pour the egg directly over the top and scramble it all together for a quick, bowl-ready meal.

● **Serve it hot and sauced.**

Cilor is defined by how it's dressed; eat these immediately while the egg is still crispy, generously zig-zagged with sweet soy sauce (kecap manis) and your favorite sambal.



# Cilung

*chee-loong*

The magic of the Indonesian elementary school street cart lies in the texture: a chewy, elastic tapioca crepe wrapped tightly around a bamboo skewer. Strict traditionalists use only tapioca, but street vendors know a touch of wheat flour stabilizes the roll so it behaves in a standard non-stick pan. The real secret, however, is 'abon bawang'—a highly seasoned garlic-breadcrumb dust that provides an aggressive, savory crunch against the soft dough. We recreate that street-cart alchemy effortlessly at home with toasted panko and store-bought fried shallots.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1/2 cup</b>	panko breadcrumbs	<b>1 cup</b>	water
<b>2 tbsp</b>	fried shallots <i>lightly crushed</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	salt
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	garlic powder	<b>1/8 tsp</b>	white pepper
<b>3/4 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder <i>divided</i>	<b>2 large</b>	eggs
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	sugar	<b>1 tbsp</b>	water
<b>1/2 cup</b>	tapioca starch	<b>2 tbsp</b>	neutral oil
<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	all-purpose flour	<b>1 tbsp</b>	spicy chili sprinkle

## PREPARATION

- **Set up your station**

Arrange 8 to 10 bamboo skewers, a small bowl of oil with a pastry brush, and your toppings right next to the stove before you begin cooking.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Toast the crunch**

Place a dry skillet over medium heat. Add the panko breadcrumbs and toast them, stirring constantly, until they turn light golden brown, about 3 to 4 minutes.

- 2. Mix the abon bawang**

Transfer the toasted panko to a small bowl. Stir in the crushed fried shallots, garlic powder, 1/4 teaspoon of the chicken bouillon powder, and the sugar. Set this aside.

- 3. Whisk the egg layer**

In a small bowl, whisk the eggs with 1 tablespoon of water and a pinch of salt and pepper until smooth and slightly frothy.

**1. Mix the batter**

In a liquid measuring cup, vigorously whisk the tapioca starch, all-purpose flour, 1 cup of water, the remaining 1/2 teaspoon of chicken bouillon powder, salt, and white pepper until all the starch is dissolved and the liquid resembles thin milk.

**2. Heat the pan**

Place an 8-inch non-stick skillet over medium-low heat. Brush the surface lightly with neutral oil so it is slick but not pooling.

**3. Swirl the batter**

Give your batter a stir, as tapioca settles rapidly. Pour 2 to 3 tablespoons into the center of the pan, immediately lifting and swirling it so the batter coats the bottom in a thin, ragged crepe.

**4. Layer the flavor**

Immediately drizzle about 1 tablespoon of the beaten egg randomly over the wet tapioca batter, then sprinkle 1 to 2 teaspoons of the toasted crunch and a dash of chili sprinkle directly onto the cooking crepe.

**5. Roll the crepe**

Watch closely. Within 1 to 2 minutes, the edges will turn translucent and begin to pull away from the pan. While the center is still slightly tacky, lay a bamboo skewer flat against one edge and roll the crepe tightly around it, pushing away from you. Press down firmly for a second at the end to seal.

**6. Serve immediately**

Remove the skewer from the pan. Repeat with the remaining batter, brushing the pan with oil each time, and eat them hot while the tapioca is deeply elastic.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Stir before you pour**

Tapioca starch settles at the bottom of the liquid almost instantly. Keep a whisk or fork in the measuring cup and agitate the batter right before pouring every single batch.

- **Timing the roll**

The batter acts as its own glue. If you wait until the crepe is entirely dry and opaque, it will not adhere to the skewer. Roll it while the top surface still looks a little sticky.

- **Eat it hot**

This is street food meant to be devoured immediately. As tapioca cools, it undergoes rapid retrogradation, turning from wonderfully chewy to tough and rubbery within a half hour.



# Cilok Bumbu Kacang

*chee-lohk boom-boo kah-chahng*

When first-generation kids talk about the smells of the homeland, they are often talking about Jajanan SD—the snacks sold from battered wooden pushcarts outside elementary schools in Indonesia. Cilok, the undisputed king of the schoolyard, is a bouncy, savory tapioca dumpling meant to be stabbed with a bamboo skewer and dragged through a wildly fragrant peanut sauce. The heartbreak of making cilok in America is that they often turn into rubber bullets once they cool. The street vendor secret is the *biang* method: cooking the wheat flour with boiling water first, then steaming the dumplings after boiling so they stay incredibly tender. No fake peanut butter hacks here

—frying raw peanuts and simmering them with makrut lime leaves and palm sugar will make your kitchen smell exactly like a bustling street in Bandung.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 cup</b>	all-purpose flour	<b>2 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 cup</b>	tapioca starch	<b>2 large</b>	Fresno or red jalapeño chilies <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>3 med cloves</b>	garlic <i>finely grated</i>	<b>2 med</b>	Thai birds eye chilies <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>2 med</b>	scallions <i>finely sliced, green parts only</i>	<b>2 med</b>	Makrut lime leaves <i>bruised</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	salt	<b>3 tbsp</b>	dark brown or palm sugar
<b>1 tsp</b>	chicken or mushroom bouillon powder	<b>1 tbsp</b>	tamarind paste <i>dissolved in 2 tbsp warm water</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground white pepper	<b>1 tbsp</b>	sweet soy sauce
<b>1 cup</b>	boiling water	<b>1 tsp</b>	salt
<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	water
<b>1 cup</b>	raw skinless peanuts	<b>1/4 cup</b>	sweet potato <i>boiled and mashed</i>
<b>3 med cloves</b>	garlic <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil

## PREPARATION

- **Cassava vs. Tapioca.**

Ensure you buy Tapioca Starch, not Cassava Flour. Tapioca is the extracted starch and gives the bounce; cassava is the whole root and will leave you with a gritty, broken dumpling.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Fry the aromatics.

In a wok or skillet, heat 3 tablespoons of neutral oil over medium heat, frying the peanuts, roughly chopped garlic, shallots, and both chilies until the peanuts are golden brown and intensely aromatic.

### 2. Blend the peanut paste.

Transfer the fried mixture and residual oil to a food processor, adding the mashed sweet potato, brown sugar, tamarind water, and salt, then blend until it forms a fine, slightly textured paste.

### 3. Simmer until the oils separate.

Return the paste to the skillet, stir in the 1 1/2 cups of water, bruised makrut lime leaves, and sweet soy sauce, simmering over medium-low heat until the sauce darkens and the peanut oils pool at the edges.

### 4. Gelatinize the flour base.

In a large heat-proof bowl, whisk the all-purpose flour, grated garlic, scallions, salt, bouillon, and white pepper, then pour in the rolling boiling water and stir vigorously until it seizes into a thick, gluey paste.

### 5. Knead in the tapioca.

Once the paste is just cool enough to handle, add the tapioca starch and 1 tablespoon of oil, kneading with your hands only until a smooth dough forms, being careful not to overwork it.

### 6. Shape and boil the dumplings.

Pinch off marble-sized pieces of dough, roll them into smooth balls, and drop them into a large pot of boiling water until they float to the surface.

### 7. Steam to lock in the texture.

Transfer the floating dumplings directly into a steamer basket set over simmering water and steam for 15 to 20 minutes to set the glossy exterior and guarantee a soft, chewy bite that survives cooling.

**1. Serve like a street vendor.**

Skewer the warm cilok on bamboo sticks, drown them generously in the warm peanut sauce, and hit them with a squeeze of fresh lime juice and an extra drizzle of sweet soy sauce.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

- **The sweet potato hack.**

Blending a little boiled sweet potato into the peanut sauce is an old vendor trick that thickens the sauce luxuriously and adds natural sweetness without needing a massive mound of expensive peanuts.

- **The science of soft cilok.**

Pre-cooking the wheat flour with boiling water creates a water-roux that inhibits starch retrogradation, preventing the tapioca from turning into a rubber ball when it hits room temperature.



# Mie Lidi Pedas

When the school bell rang in nineties Indonesia, kids didn't walk home —they sprinted to the carts waiting at the gates for a crinkly plastic bag of Mie Lidi. These intensely savory, chili-stained noodle sticks are the taste of pure, unsupervised youth. While the street vendors extruded their own dough, resourceful mothers quickly adopted standard dried spaghetti to pull off this weeknight magic. The real secret, however, is the wet seasoning. By blooming flour and spices in hot oil instead of water, you create a fiery paste that clings perfectly to the noodles without sacrificing a single decibel of crunch.

## INGREDIENTS

**1/2 lb**

standard dried spaghetti  
*snapped in half to 4-inch lengths*

**2 cup**

neutral cooking oil

**4 tbsp** all-purpose flour  
**2 tbsp** Asian chili powder  
**1 tbsp** chicken bouillon powder

**1 tsp** granulated sugar  
**1 tsp** garlic powder  
**3 small** fresh kaffir lime leaves  
*stems removed and very finely minced*

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Fry the spaghetti to a pale blonde.

Heat the neutral oil in a wide skillet over medium heat, then fry the broken spaghetti in batches for 2 to 3 minutes until just light golden, removing them before they darken. They will continue to toast from their own internal heat as they drain on paper towels.

### 2. Crisp the aromatics.

Carefully scoop out half a cup of the hot frying oil into a small saucepan over medium-low heat and fry the minced lime leaves for 30 seconds until fiercely fragrant.

### 3. Whisk the waterless slurry.

In a heat-proof bowl, combine the flour, chili powder, bouillon, sugar, and garlic powder, then immediately pour the hot infused oil over the dry mix. Whisk vigorously so the hot fat cooks out the raw flour taste and blooms the spices into a glossy, fiery paste without introducing any crunch-destroying moisture.

### 4. Coat the noodles.

Place the cooled, brittle spaghetti sticks into a large container with a tight-fitting lid, pour the hot spice slurry over them, and shake gently until every single noodle is painted red.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Embrace the bouillon.**

MSG-heavy chicken bouillon is the absolute, non-negotiable backbone of this street food flavor profile; do not try to substitute it with high-end homemade stock.

- **Adjust the heat.**

Street vendors always let kids dictate their own spice level, so feel free to swap the fiery chili powder for a milder smoked paprika if serving a younger crowd.



# Makan Tengah: The Weeknight Communal Table

*The core of everyday Indonesian family dining: quick, high-flavor dishes meant to be shared communally on a busy weeknight.*

Makan tengah translates simply to eating in the middle. It is how the working world decompresses: a steaming, gravitational mound of white rice anchoring the table, surrounded by a chaotic orbit of whatever can be fried, wok-tossed, or simmered in thirty minutes. There is no pretense here. It is just the fast, loud, deeply necessary ritual of a family feeding itself after a long day.

This is the unvarnished reality of the Indonesian weeknight. A splatter of hot oil for turmeric-stained chicken, the bruised aromatics of a proper nasi goreng, and the sharp, reviving tang of tamarind soup to cut through the exhaustion. It is communal dining born of pure necessity, surviving translation to any kitchen without losing an ounce of its soul. The bowls are passed, the rice is spooned, and the day is finally done.





## Ayam Goreng Mentega

If you ask a first-generation Indonesian kid about their ultimate comfort food, the answer is almost always Ayam Goreng Mentega. It is a brilliant collision of Dutch colonial dairy and Chinese wok technique, and the definitive taste of the Indonesian-Chinese communal table. Grandma might insist on hacking a bone-in chicken with a meat cleaver and deep-frying it in a vat of oil, but we are swapping in boneless thighs and a quick shallow fry for your Tuesday night. A cornstarch-laced marinade builds a microscopic crust that drinks up a glossy, savory-sweet emulsion of butter, sweet soy, and Worcestershire sauce, yielding exactly what home tastes like without the messy cleanup.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	boneless skinless chicken thighs <i>cut into 1.5-inch pieces</i>	<b>1/2 med</b>	yellow onion <i>sliced vertically into half-moons</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh lime juice	<b>3 small clove</b>	garlic <i>smashed and roughly chopped</i>
<b>3 small clove</b>	garlic <i>minced</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	Kecap Manis
<b>1 tbsp</b>	soy sauce	<b>2 tbsp</b>	Worcestershire sauce
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1 tbsp</b>	oyster sauce
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground white pepper	<b>1 tsp</b>	granulated sugar
<b>2 tbsp</b>	cornstarch	<b>1/4 cup</b>	water
<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>2 med</b>	scallion <i>sliced diagonally into 1-inch pieces</i>
<b>4 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter	<b>1 med</b>	lime <i>cut into wedges</i>

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Massage the lime juice, minced garlic, soy sauce, salt, and white pepper into the chicken until fully absorbed.**

Sprinkle the cornstarch over the top and mix until every piece is coated in a light, slightly sticky paste, then let it sit at room temperature for 15 to 30 minutes so the lime juice can neutralize any gamey poultry aroma.

- 2. Heat the neutral oil in a large skillet or wok over medium-high heat.**

Once the oil is shimmering, add the marinated chicken in a single layer and sear undisturbed for 3 to 4 minutes to build a golden-brown crust, then flip and fry until cooked through before transferring to a plate.

- 3. Drop the heat to medium and melt the butter straight into the pan, scraping up all the browned bits of chicken left behind.**

Toss in the sliced onion and smashed garlic, sautéing for 3 to 4 minutes until the onions are soft, translucent, and just beginning to caramelize at the edges.

1. **Pour in the Kecap Manis, Worcestershire sauce, oyster sauce, sugar, and water to build the glaze.**

Let the sauce simmer vigorously for 1 to 2 minutes until it reduces into a dark, glossy lacquer that easily coats the back of a spoon.

2. **Slide the fried chicken and any accumulated juices back into the bubbling skillet and toss continuously for under a minute.**

The cornstarch crust will drink up the buttery glaze perfectly without getting soggy; turn off the heat, fold in the scallions, squeeze a fresh lime wedge over the top, and serve immediately with steamed rice.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **The secret to the crust is cornstarch.**

A light dusting of cornstarch directly in the marinade creates a microscopic barrier that crisps up beautifully during the shallow fry, acting like a sponge for the buttery sauce later.

- **Embrace the Worcestershire sauce.**

While originally a British export, the Indonesian variation known as Kecap Inggris is a cornerstone of this specific dish's flavor profile; standard Western Worcestershire sauce is the perfect weeknight stand-in to achieve that iconic tangy depth.

- **The butter versus margarine debate.**

Generations of Indonesian home cooks and roadside stalls have relied on savory, high-smoke-point local margarine like Blue Band for this recipe. Butter elevates the richness, but if you want to perfectly replicate a Jakarta street food stall, a robust margarine is the grandmotherly secret.



# Tumis Kangkung Terasi

*too-miss kahng-koong tuh-rah-see*

The smell of fermented shrimp paste hitting screaming-hot oil is the ultimate dinner bell for anyone with Indonesian roots. It's a pungent, unapologetically funky aroma that means something intensely savory is about to hit the table. The secret to killer water spinach is simple, but absolute: get the wok blistering, dry your greens completely, and never, ever cover the pan. Treat this like a two-minute sprint and you'll get the vibrant, crunchy, umami-bomb your grandmother used to make.

## INGREDIENTS

**1 lb** water spinach  
*washed, dried completely, leaves  
plucked, stems cut into 2-inch pieces*

**5 med** small shallots  
*thinly sliced*

<b>3 med</b>	garlic	<b>1 tbsp</b>	oyster sauce
<b>clove</b>	<i>thinly sliced</i>	<b>1/2 tbsp</b>	sweet soy sauce
<b>4 med</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	sugar
	<i>sliced diagonally</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	salt
<b>1 med</b>	Roma tomato	<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil
	<i>roughly chopped</i>		
<b>1 tsp</b>	Indonesian shrimp paste		
	<i>toasted and mashed into powder</i>		

## PREPARATION

- **Dry the greens completely.**

Wash the water spinach in cold water, then dry it thoroughly using a salad spinner or towels. If the greens are wet, they will drop the temperature of your wok and steam instead of fry.

- **Separate the stems and leaves.**

Keep the plucked leaves and 2-inch stem pieces in separate piles before you begin. They require different cooking times, and this dish moves far too quickly to adjust on the fly.

- **Toast the raw shrimp paste.**

If your paste comes in a raw block, wrap 1 teaspoon in a small square of aluminum foil, press it flat, and toast in a dry skillet over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes per side until it smells nutty and smoky. Skip this if using pre-toasted jarred paste.

- **Mix the sauce.**

In a small bowl, whisk together the oyster sauce, sweet soy sauce, sugar, and salt so it's ready to pour the second you need it.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Sear the aromatics.**

Heat a wok or large, wide skillet over medium-high heat and add the neutral oil. Once shimmering, toss in the shallots, garlic, chilies, and toasted shrimp paste.

**1. Bloom the shrimp paste.**

Stir-fry constantly for about 60 to 90 seconds. Use your spatula to smash the shrimp paste into the oil so it dissolves completely. When the garlic turns golden and highly fragrant, toss in the chopped tomato and stir for another 30 seconds.

**2. Flash-fry the stems.**

Turn your stove to the absolute highest heat setting possible. Pour in your pre-mixed sauce, immediately drop in the water spinach stems, and toss rapidly for 30 seconds to allow the thick stems to blister.

**3. Wilt the leaves.**

Drop in the leaves. Keep the heat on maximum, tossing aggressively and continuously for exactly 1 minute until the leaves turn a stunning, glossy, vibrant green. Do not cover the wok.

**4. Serve instantly.**

As soon as the leaves have wilted but the stems still have a slight crunch, turn off the heat and transfer the dish instantly to a serving platter to stop the cooking process.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Substitute greens carefully.**

If you can't find water spinach (often labeled Ong Choy), substitute a large bunch of mature spinach or Swiss chard. Cut the cooking time in half, as they wilt almost instantly.

● **Fake the sweet soy sauce.**

If you can't source Indonesian kecap manis, mix 1 tablespoon of regular soy sauce with 1 tablespoon of dark brown sugar or molasses until a thick syrup forms.



# Bakwan Jagung

*bahk-wahn jah-goong*

If you grew up in an Indonesian household, you know the sound: the aggressive, glorious sizzle of batter hitting hot oil right before dinner. The Americanized versions of corn fritters are often sweet and doughy, but the authentic Indonesian bakwan jagung is savory, heavily aromatic, and shatteringly crispy. The secret your grandma knew lies in two simple rules: crushing half the kernels to release their natural, milky starches, and cutting the wheat flour with rice flour to guarantee a glass-like crunch that holds up on a communal table.

## INGREDIENTS

**3 med**

sweet corn  
*kernels cut from the cob*

**2 med**

scallions  
*thinly sliced*

**1/4 cup** Chinese celery leaves  
*roughly chopped*

**1 large** shallot  
*roughly chopped*

**3 med  
clove** garlic  
*peeled*

**1 tsp** ground coriander

**1 tsp** kosher salt

**1/2 tsp** ground white pepper

**1/2 tsp** sugar

**1/2 cup** all-purpose flour

**1/4 cup** rice flour

**1 large** egg  
*lightly beaten*

**1/4 cup** ice water

**2 cup** neutral oil  
*for frying*

## PREPARATION

- **Prepare your frying station.**

Set a wire cooling rack over a baking sheet before you begin frying to ensure the hot fritters don't sit in their own steam and become soggy.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Pulse exactly half of the corn kernels into a chunky, wet mash.**

In a food processor or large mortar and pestle, process the corn just enough to release its milky starches, then fold this mash together with the remaining whole kernels in a large mixing bowl.

- 2. Process the aromatics into a smooth paste.**

Combine the shallot, garlic, ground coriander, salt, white pepper, and sugar in the food processor or mortar, pounding or blending until highly fragrant and smooth.

- 3. Mix the batter gently with ice water just until it comes together.**

Add the aromatic paste, scallions, and celery leaves to the corn, sprinkle both flours over the top, and fold in the beaten egg and ice water one tablespoon at a time until the mixture lightly coats the corn without turning into a heavy soup.

- 1. Fry the fritters in hot oil until deeply golden and shatteringly crisp.**  
Heat a half-inch of neutral oil in a heavy skillet over medium-high heat. Drop large spoonfuls of batter into the oil, flattening them slightly, and fry for 2 to 3 minutes per side.
- 2. Drain on a wire rack and serve immediately.**  
Avoid paper towels, which trap steam and ruin the crunch; serve piping hot alongside warm rice and plenty of sambal.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **The Winter Emergency.**  
If you must use canned or frozen sweet corn, completely thaw, drain, and meticulously pat the kernels dry with paper towels; excess water is the enemy of a crispy fritter.
- **The Rice Flour Rule.**  
Wheat flour creates gluten, which makes things chewy; cutting it with rice flour acts as a barrier, ensuring the fritter shatters when you bite into it and remains crispy as it cools on the communal table.
- **The Celery Substitution.**  
Indonesian Chinese celery has a highly aromatic, pungent leaf. If you can't find it, use the leafy, pale inner fronds of a standard celery bunch or flat-leaf Italian parsley.



# Sayur Asem Jakarta

*sah-yoor ah-sem*

Sayur Asem is the great unifier of the Indonesian table, a chaotic yet perfectly harmonized collision of hard corn, earthy peanuts, and vibrant leaves plunged into an unapologetically sour tamarind broth. This is the authentic Jakarta iteration—the Betawi style—which means we're utilizing unpeeled peanuts and the clouding richness of toasted macadamia nuts to build a deeply savory foundation. It's an essential palate cleanser built for communal weeknight eating, cutting right through the intense heat of sambal and the rich fat of fried chicken. Just don't let me catch you putting a Western bay leaf in the pot.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1/2 lb</b>	beef chuck <i>cut into bite-sized pieces (optional)</i>	<b>4 med</b>	Fresno chilies <i>stemmed</i>
<b>8 cup</b>	water	<b>4 med</b>	macadamia nuts <i>lightly toasted in a dry pan</i>
<b>2 med</b>	dried Indonesian bay leaves	<b>1 tsp</b>	shrimp paste <i>tightly wrapped in foil and toasted over a flame for 1 minute</i>
<b>1 med</b>	fresh galangal <i>cut into a 1-inch slice and bruised</i>	<b>1 large</b>	sweet corn <i>cut crosswise into 1-inch thick rounds</i>
<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	tamarind paste <i>dissolved in 1/4 cup warm water and strained</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	raw unpeeled peanuts
<b>1 tbsp</b>	salt	<b>1 cup</b>	canned young green jackfruit <i>rinsed and roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	sugar	<b>1 med</b>	chayote squash <i>peeled, cored, and cut into 1-inch cubes</i>
<b>6 med</b>	small shallots <i>peeled</i>	<b>5 med</b>	yardlong beans <i>cut into 2-inch pieces</i>
<b>3 med</b>	garlic	<b>1 cup</b>	frozen melinjo leaves <i>thawed</i>
<b>clove</b>	<i>peeled</i>		

## PREPARATION

- **Toast the shrimp paste to awaken its depth.**

Wrap the pungent shrimp paste tightly in a small piece of aluminum foil and hold it directly over a gas flame with tongs for about a minute until deeply fragrant.

- **Prepare the tamarind water.**

Vigorously mix the sticky tamarind pulp with a quarter cup of warm water, massaging it to release the sour extract, then strain out and discard the seeds and fibers.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. **Simmer the beef to build your foundation.**

If using beef chuck, bring the water to a boil, drop in the beef, and simmer for 30 minutes, skimming any scum that rises to the top. If skipping the meat, simply bring eight cups of water to a rolling boil.

### 2. **Process the aromatics into a fine, uniform paste.**

Blitz the shallots, garlic, chilies, toasted macadamia nuts, and toasted shrimp paste in a food processor until smooth, adding a splash of water if the blades get stuck.

### 3. **Deploy the tough ingredients first.**

Add the spice paste, bruised galangal, and Indonesian bay leaves to the boiling broth, followed immediately by the raw peanuts, sweet corn rounds, and young jackfruit. Lower the heat to a steady simmer and let it go for 15 to 20 minutes until the peanuts yield to the tooth.

### 4. **Balance the sour broth and add the squash.**

Stir in the strained tamarind water, salt, and sugar, tasting carefully to ensure a sharp, vibrant acidity grounded by savory shrimp paste. Drop in the cubed chayote and simmer for another 7 to 10 minutes until fork-tender but structurally intact.

### 5. **Flash-cook the delicate greens.**

Toss in the yardlong beans and melinjo leaves, letting them cook for exactly two minutes before cutting the heat entirely. The residual warmth of the pot will finish the job, preserving their crunch and vivid green color.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Never substitute Western bay laurel for Indonesian daun salam.**

The Mediterranean leaf belongs in a French stew, not here; it will give your soup an unwanted medicinal pine flavor. Source the real thing from an Asian grocer, or omit it entirely.

- **Embrace the unpeeled peanut.**

The red skins of the raw peanuts are the signature of a true Jakarta-style Sayur Asem, imparting a subtle earthiness and a beautiful, hazy reddish-brown tint to the finished broth.



## Ayam Goreng Kuning Ungkep

There is a distinct, undeniable aroma that signals a proper Indonesian home: the earthy, floral collision of turmeric, coriander, and galangal hitting hot oil. This is ayam goreng kuning, a masterclass in the ancestral ungkep technique where chicken is slowly braised in a golden spice paste and pure coconut water before hitting the fryer. It tenderizes the bird to the bone while laying down a complex, caramelized sugar crust. Scaled for the softer birds of the American supermarket, this weeknight magic demands zero compromises—just the brilliant, unadulterated taste of the homeland.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>3 lb</b>	bone-in skin-on chicken pieces <i>mix of thighs and drumsticks</i>	<b>6 large</b>	shallots <i>peeled and roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	pure coconut water <i>no pulp or added sugar</i>	<b>5 large</b>	garlic cloves <i>peeled</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>4 med</b>	macadamia nuts <i>toasted in a dry pan for 3 minutes</i>
<b>2 cup</b>	neutral oil	<b>1 1/2 inch</b>	fresh turmeric root <i>charred over a gas flame for a few seconds</i>
<b>2 med</b>	fresh lemongrass stalks <i>pale bottom 4 inches only, smashed heavily</i>	<b>1 inch</b>	fresh ginger root <i>peeled and chopped</i>
<b>4 med</b>	Makrut lime leaves <i>torn slightly to release oils</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	whole coriander seeds <i>toasted in a dry pan until fragrant</i>
<b>3 med</b>	Indonesian bay leaves	<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 inch</b>	fresh galangal <i>thickly sliced and smashed</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground white pepper

## PREPARATION

- **Blend the golden spice paste.**

In a food processor, combine the shallots, garlic, toasted macadamia nuts, charred turmeric, ginger, toasted coriander, salt, and pepper, pulsing into a very fine, smooth paste.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Awaken the spices in hot oil.**

Heat two tablespoons of neutral oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat, then add the spice paste, smashed lemongrass, torn lime leaves, bay leaves, and galangal, sautéing for about seven minutes until the raw onion aroma completely burns off and the oil just begins to separate.

**1. Braise the chicken in pure coconut water.**

Toss the chicken in the hot marigold paste to coat, pour in the coconut water, and bring to a lively simmer before lowering the heat, covering the pot, and cooking for thirty minutes.

**2. Reduce the glaze and cool completely.**

Remove the lid and boil off any remaining watery liquid until a thick, oily glaze clings to the bird, then transfer the chicken to a wire rack to cool completely so the crust stays glued to the meat during the fry.

**3. Flash-fry to a deep golden crisp.**

Heat two inches of neutral oil in a heavy skillet to 350°F, then carefully lower in the cooled chicken for two to three minutes per side, letting the natural coconut sugars caramelize into a magnificent, savory crust.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Fry the leftover spice paste for a savory garnish.**

Cook any thick, oil-rich paste left in the braising pot until dark and crumbly, then scatter this umami-heavy crumb directly over steaming hot rice.

● **Leverage the braise for easy weeknight meal prep.**

The braised chicken can be safely kept in the fridge for up to four days or frozen for two months; when you are ready to eat, simply thaw and flash-fry.

● **Watch the Maillard reaction carefully in the hot oil.**

Residual sugars from the coconut water cause the chicken to brown exceptionally fast, so pull the pieces when they reach a rich golden-amber to prevent scorching.



# Tempe Orek Manis

*tem-pay oh-reck mah-nees*

If there is one dish that instantly transports a first-generation kid back to their mother’s kitchen on a Tuesday night, it is this. Tempeh is arguably Indonesia’s greatest indigenous culinary invention, and this wet, sticky, braised version—built for the modern weeknight—turns it into a sponge for a violently flavorful glaze of sweet soy, palm sugar, and tamarind. It’s cheap, it’s fast, and when you get that caramelization right in the pan, it tastes exactly like home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>8 oz</b>	tempeh <i>cut into 1/2-inch cubes</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>4 med</b>	shallot <i>peeled and thinly sliced</i>

<b>3 small</b>	garlic <i>peeled and thinly sliced</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	Kecap Manis
<b>2 med</b>	Fresno chilies <i>seeded and sliced diagonally</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	dark brown sugar
<b>1 med</b>	fresh galangal <i>sliced into thick coins and bruised with the back of a knife</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	tamarind paste <i>mixed with 1 tbsp warm water</i>
<b>2 small</b>	dried Indonesian bay leaves	<b>1/4 cup</b>	water
		<b>1/2 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder
		<b>1/4 tsp</b>	white pepper

## PREPARATION

- **Season the raw tempeh.**

Toss the cubed tempeh with the kosher salt in a small bowl before cooking to ensure the inside of the protein is properly seasoned.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Shallow-fry the seasoned tempeh in neutral oil over medium-high heat until half-cooked.**

Cook for 4 to 5 minutes until the cubes are golden and blistered but still yield to a gentle squeeze, then remove them to a paper-towel-lined plate.

- 2. Discard all but two tablespoons of the oil and lower the heat to medium to bloom the aromatics.**

Sauté the shallots and garlic for a minute until soft and pale gold, then toss in the chilies, bruised galangal, and bay leaves for another 30 seconds to release their essential oils.

- 3. Add the Kecap Manis, brown sugar, and tamarind mixture directly to the center of the pan to caramelize.**

This is the critical secret; letting the sugars hit the hot oil develops a deep, complex smokiness before you add any liquid.

- 4. Pour in the water, bouillon, and white pepper, scraping up any sticky bits as you bring it to a rapid boil.**

**1. Dump the fried tempeh back into the wok and stir vigorously.**

Toss over medium heat for two to three minutes until the water evaporates and the sauce reduces into a thick, glossy syrup that hugs every piece of tempeh tightly.

**2. Turn off the heat and discard the galangal and bay leaves before serving.**

Transfer to a communal platter and serve hot alongside steamed jasmine rice.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Respect the Indonesian bay leaf.**

Do not substitute a Western bay leaf under any circumstances; its menthol, eucalyptus notes will completely ruin the Javanese flavor profile. If you cannot find dried Daun Salam at an Asian grocer, omit it entirely.

- **Do not skip the tamarind.**

It provides the essential tartness needed to cut through the heavy richness of the sweet soy sauce and brown sugar. If you absolutely cannot find tamarind paste, add a tablespoon of fresh lime juice off the heat at the very end.

- **Accept no substitutes for Kecap Manis.**

Regular soy sauce mixed with sugar will not replicate the thick, molasses-like viscosity of authentic Indonesian sweet soy sauce like Bango or ABC brand.



## Nasi Goreng Tek-Tek

If you grew up in an Indonesian household, the rhythmic, metallic tek-tek of the street vendor's spatula at ten o'clock at night meant one thing: salvation in a wok. This isn't the tired, soy-drenched takeout fried rice of American strip malls; it is a masterclass in aggressive caramelization and deep, fermented funk. The secret is the *bumbu halus*—a freshly blended wet spice paste—and swapping out mildly toxic candlenuts for their biological cousin, the macadamia, to achieve that essential creamy emulsion. Batch the paste on a Sunday, and you'll possess the ultimate weeknight weapon to effortlessly replicate that dark, smoky street-cart magic in your own kitchen.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>5 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	kecap manis
<b>4 med</b>	garlic clove <i>peeled</i>	<b>1/2 tbsp</b>	oyster sauce
<b>3 med</b>	macadamia nuts	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	salt
<b>2 med</b>	dried red chilies <i>soaked in warm water to soften</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder
<b>1 tsp</b>	fermented shrimp paste <i>toasted</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	white pepper
<b>3 tbsp</b>	canola oil	<b>1 cup</b>	green cabbage <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	water	<b>1 cup</b>	mustard greens <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>4 cup</b>	jasmine rice <i>cooked a day ahead, chilled, and gently crumbled to separate grains</i>	<b>1 med</b>	scallion <i>thinly sliced</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	canola oil	<b>2 tbsp</b>	fried shallots
<b>2 large</b>	eggs	<b>1/2 med</b>	cucumber <i>sliced</i>
<b>1/2 cup</b>	cooked chicken <i>shredded</i>	<b>1 med</b>	tomato <i>sliced</i>
		<b>1 cup</b>	prawn crackers

## PREPARATION

- **Blitz the aromatics into a smooth bumbu halus.**

Combine the shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, soaked chilies, shrimp paste, 3 tablespoons of canola oil, and water in a small blender or food processor, pulsing until it forms a creamy paste.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1. Crack the oil to neutralize the raw aromatics.**

Heat a wok or your largest skillet over medium heat, pour in the spice paste, and sauté for 5 to 7 minutes until the water evaporates, the paste darkens, and the oil visibly bubbles and separates around the edges—a non-negotiable step called *pecah minyak*.

**2. Secure your weeknight stash.**

Scoop exactly half of the cooked paste out of the wok and save it in a jar in the fridge; this recipe yields enough *bumbu* for four portions, giving you a serious head start on tomorrow's dinner.

**3. Scramble the eggs and build the savory foundation.**

Push the remaining paste to one side of the wok, turn the heat to medium-high, add the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil to the empty side, and vigorously scramble the eggs until just set before tossing in the shredded chicken to coat it in the fragrant red-gold oils.

**4. Summon the breath of the wok.**

Crank your burner to its absolute maximum, add the cold, crumbled rice, and toss aggressively, pressing the back of your spatula into the grains to break up any lingering clumps.

**5. Caramelize the sauces for smoky, street-cart depth.**

Drizzle the *kecap manis* and oyster sauce directly around the hot edges of the wok rather than on the rice itself, allowing the sugars to instantly bubble and smoke before rapidly tossing them through the grains along with the salt, *bouillon*, and white pepper.

**6. Fold in the greens strictly off the heat.**

Turn off the burner entirely and immediately fold in the chopped cabbage, mustard greens, and scallions so the residual heat wilts them perfectly while preserving their essential crunch.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Respect the garnish.**

In Indonesian cuisine, garnishes aren't optional window dressing; the cooling cucumber, sweet-bitter fried shallots, and crispy prawn crackers are architectural necessities to cut through the intense, oily weight of the rice.

- **The macadamia hack.**

Candlenuts (kemiri) provide the signature creamy emulsion of Indonesian spice pastes but are highly toxic if eaten raw and nearly impossible to find fresh in America. The macadamia nut is biologically related, entirely safe, and provides the exact same high-fat botanical structure.





# Masuk Angin: Mother's Magic Potions

*Restorative, root-based healing recipes passed down through generations of Indonesian mothers to cure the body and soothe the soul.*

There is a very specific, inescapable misery known to every Indonesian: masuk angin. The wind enters the body, the joints ache, and the spirit flatlines. The cure, historically, has never been found in a sterile pharmacy aisle. It is

found in the kitchen, administered by a mother standing over a violently simmering pot, bruising ginger and grating fresh turmeric until her knuckles stain a bright, unapologetic yellow.

This is the ancient, undeniable arsenal of maternal care. It is the golden, fat-beaded surface of Soto Ayam, the sharp, throat-clearing burn of a proper jamu, and the dark, soothing gravity of Bubur Ketan Hitam. There is no wellness-industry mysticism here—just centuries of women knowing exactly which roots and rhizomes to boil to sweat the sickness out and pull you back from the ledge.





## Sayur Sop Bening

In Indonesia, the monsoon rains and a sudden sneeze mean a bad case of masuk angin—the entering wind. The undisputed mother's cure is Sayur Sop Bening. Forget heavy stews; this clear soup gets its soul from a centuries-old collision of Dutch colonial tradition and Javanese spice alchemy. The secret to making it taste exactly like home is the bumbu halus—a pungent paste of shallot, garlic, white pepper, and fresh nutmeg, aggressively fried until golden before it ever meets the broth. For a weeknight, high-quality boxed stock fortified with a little bouillon and fresh vegetables will get you there. Just don't skip the Chinese celery or the shower of fried shallots at the end.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>4 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>2 med</b>	carrots <i>peeled and sliced into 1/4-inch rounds</i>
<b>4 med</b>	garlic <i>smashed</i>	<b>2 med</b>	Yukon Gold or russet potatoes <i>peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	white pepper	<b>1 cup</b>	green beans <i>trimmed and cut into 1 1/2-inch pieces</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	whole nutmeg <i>freshly grated</i>	<b>2 cup</b>	green cabbage <i>cored and cut into rough 2-inch squares</i>
<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>2 med</b>	scallions <i>finely sliced</i>
<b>6 cup</b>	low-sodium chicken broth	<b>1/4 cup</b>	Chinese celery leaves <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 med</b>	bone-in chicken thigh <i>optional</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	crispy fried shallots
<b>1 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder	<b>1 med</b>	lime <i>cut into wedges for serving</i>
<b>1 pinch</b>	sugar		
<b>to taste</b>	kosher salt		

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Create the aromatic paste.

In a mini food processor or a mortar and pestle, pulse the shallots and garlic until they form a coarse paste, or mince them as finely as humanly possible.

### 2. Fry the bumbu.

Heat the oil in a large pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, then add the shallot-garlic paste, white pepper, and freshly grated nutmeg. Sauté continuously for 3 to 4 minutes until deeply golden and fragrant—this Maillard reaction builds the entire foundation of the soup.

### 3. Build the broth.

Pour the chicken broth into the pot, scraping up any browned bits from the bottom, and stir in the chicken thigh if using, bouillon powder, and a pinch of sugar. Bring the liquid to a rolling boil over medium-high heat.

**1. Boil the root vegetables.**

Drop in the carrots and potatoes, reduce the heat to a steady simmer, and cook for 6 to 8 minutes until they just begin to yield to a fork.

**2. Add the greens sequentially.**

Stir in the green beans and cook for 3 minutes, then push the cabbage down into the broth and simmer for 2 to 3 minutes until slightly translucent but still vibrant and crunchy.

**3. Season and garnish.**

Turn off the heat immediately to stop the vegetables from overcooking. Taste and adjust the salt, stir in the scallions and Chinese celery leaves to let the residual heat release their oils, and serve immediately topped generously with crispy fried shallots.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Do not substitute Chinese celery with Western stalk celery.**

Chinese celery (seledri) acts as an herb, not a bulk vegetable, bringing a pungent, herbaceous counterpoint to the rich broth. If you cannot find it at an Asian grocer, mix the finely chopped inner leafy tops of Western celery with a little flat-leaf parsley instead.

● **Commit to white pepper.**

Black pepper will fundamentally change the flavor profile. The sharp, lingering heat of white pepper is central to the traditional masuk angin cure.



# STMJ

*soo-soo teh-loor mah-doo jah-hay*

When the chill sets into your bones and simple ginger tea won't cut it, Indonesian mothers deploy the heavy artillery. Born in the cool, elevated air of Malang, STMJ is a fiercely restorative elixir. By strictly adhering to the native wisdom of blistering the ginger over an open flame and aggressively tempering the egg yolk, you get a velvety, custard-like potion that punches right through fatigue. No blowtorches, no trendy café embellishments. Just the real, warming cure exactly as intended.

## INGREDIENTS

**1 cup** whole milk

**1 oz** fresh ginger root  
*unpeeled*

**1 med** cinnamon stick

**2 small** whole cloves

**2 small** cardamom pods  
*lightly crushed*

**1 large** pasteurized egg  
*yolk separated, white discarded*

**2 tbsp** honey

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. **Blister and smash the ginger.**

Hold the unpeeled ginger directly over a gas flame with tongs for a couple of minutes until the skin is blistered and aromatic, then crush it flat on a board with the side of a heavy knife.

### 2. **Simmer the spiced milk.**

Combine the milk, smashed ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and cardamom in a small saucepan over medium-low heat and let it gently bubble for 3 to 5 minutes to extract the essential oils.

### 3. **Whisk the egg base.**

While the milk infuses, drop the yolk and honey into your mug and beat them vigorously until pale and slightly frothy to protect the egg proteins from scrambling.

### 4. **Temper the egg and serve.**

Set a fine-mesh strainer over the mug and pour the hot spiced milk through it in a slow, steady stream while whisking the egg mixture rapidly.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Don't rush the pour.**

Dumping boiling milk directly onto a stagnant egg yolk will give you sweet egg drop soup, so whisk like you mean it.

- **The raw egg reality.**

Using just the yolk eliminates the slimy texture and fishy smell of the whites, while the pasteurized egg gives you peace of mind in an American kitchen.



# Bakmi Godog Jawa

*bahk-mee goh-dohg jah-wah*

When the Ohio winter bites and the sniffles set in, this is the remedy. On the streets of Java, vendors sling this dish from wooden pushcarts over glowing charcoal, but the true magic happens in the technique, not the fire. The secret is *mlekoh*—a method of violently boiling deeply savory macadamia nuts and rich eggs into the broth until it turns luxuriously creamy. It is garlic-heavy, profoundly warming, and tastes exactly like a hug from an Indonesian grandmother.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>6 oz</b>	dried Asian egg noodles	<b>1 cup</b>	cooked chicken <i>shredded</i>
<b>3 cup</b>	high-quality chicken bone broth	<b>2 large</b>	jumbo pasture-raised eggs

<b>4 large</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	choy sum <i>chopped into 2-inch pieces</i>
<b>4 med</b>	garlic cloves <i>peeled</i>	<b>1 small</b>	Roma tomato <i>cut into wedges</i>
<b>3 med</b>	raw unsalted macadamia nuts	<b>1 med</b>	scallion <i>sliced on the bias</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	whole white peppercorns	<b>1 tbsp</b>	kecap manis
<b>1 tsp</b>	Diamond Crystal kosher salt	<b>1 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder
<b>2 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>2 tbsp</b>	crispy fried shallots
<b>1 cup</b>	green cabbage <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1/4 cup</b>	acar timun

## PREPARATION

- **Parboil the noodles.**

Bring a pot of water to a boil, cook the egg noodles one minute less than the package instructs, then drain and rinse under cold water so they can absorb the broth later without turning to mush.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Pound the aromatic spice paste.**

In a mortar and pestle or small food processor, combine the shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, white peppercorns, and salt, grinding until it forms a smooth, oily paste.

- 2. Fry the paste to split the oil.**

Heat the neutral oil in a wok or deep skillet over medium-high heat, add the spice paste, and sauté constantly for 3 to 4 minutes until it turns a deep golden tan and the oil separates from the solids.

- 3. Heat the broth.**

Pour in the chicken broth, add the shredded chicken, and bring to a furious, rolling boil.

**1. Build the creamy emulsion.**

Crack the eggs straight into the violently boiling broth and immediately stir vigorously in rapid circles to scramble the eggs; within seconds, the clear liquid will emulsify with the fat into a thick, milky, golden soup.

**2. Wilt the cabbage.**

Lower the heat to medium, stir in the cabbage and kecap manis, and let it simmer for exactly one minute.

**3. Finish and serve.**

Stir in the parboiled noodles, choy sum, tomato wedges, scallion, and bouillon powder, cooking for just 30 seconds before ladling into deep bowls and garnishing heavily with crispy shallots and acar timun.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The secret to the soup is the violent boil.**

Do not gently poach the eggs. The rapid mechanical agitation of the boiling broth is what binds the egg fat and macadamia oils with the water, creating the signature mlekoh texture without a drop of dairy.

● **Do not rush the spice paste.**

The process of pecah minyak (splitting the oil) is the bedrock of Indonesian flavor, mellowing the raw bite of garlic and shallots into a deep, savory sweetness.

● **Macadamia nuts are the perfect American substitute.**

They share an almost identical fat profile to the native, toxic-when-raw Javanese candlenut (kemiri), blending smoothly and emulsifying perfectly to thicken the broth.



# Sop Ayam Klaten Ala Pak Min

If you tell an Indonesian mother you have a chill, she will diagnose you with masuk angin and hand you a bowl of this soup. Born from a military cook selling from a shoulder pole in the 1960s, Pak Min's legendary cure eschews the celery and carrots of American chicken noodle soup. Instead, it relies on an aggressively spiced, crystal-clear broth roaring with crushed white pepper, ginger, whole spices, and a secret punch of dried shrimp. It is uncompromised, deeply restorative, and unapologetically Javanese.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 lb</b>	bone-in skin-on chicken thighs and wings	<b>2 1/2 l</b>	water
		<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral oil

<b>7 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>4 med</b>	whole cloves
<b>5 large</b>	garlic cloves	<b>3 med</b>	white cardamom pods <i>lightly crushed</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	whole white peppercorns	<b>1 med</b>	star anise
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	whole nutmeg <i>freshly grated</i>	<b>1 1/2 tbsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 tbsp</b>	dried shrimp <i>soaked in hot water for 5 minutes and drained</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	sugar
<b>2 med</b>	lemongrass stalks <i>thick bottom parts only, smashed</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder
<b>2 oz</b>	fresh ginger <i>thickly sliced and heavily smashed</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	Chinese celery leaves <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 oz</b>	fresh galangal <i>smashed</i>	<b>3 med</b>	scallions <i>thinly sliced</i>
<b>2 med</b>	Indonesian bay leaves	<b>1/4 cup</b>	fried shallots
<b>3 med</b>	kaffir lime leaves <i>edges torn</i>	<b>1 med</b>	lime <i>cut into wedges</i>
<b>1 small</b>	cinnamon stick	<b>2 tbsp</b>	sambal rawit or clean chili paste

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Blanch the chicken to ensure a crystal-clear broth.**  
Place the chicken in a large pot, cover with cold water, and boil violently for 3 to 5 minutes until the grey scum rises, then drain and rinse the meat and pot thoroughly.
- 2. Start the master broth.**  
Return the clean chicken to the clean pot with two and a half liters of fresh water, bring to a boil, then immediately drop the heat to the lowest possible setting for a lazy simmer.
- 3. Blend the spice paste.**  
While the chicken simmers, pound or blend the shallots, garlic, white peppercorns, grated nutmeg, and soaked dried shrimp into a smooth paste, adding a splash of oil if needed.

**1. Sauté the paste to kill the raw flavor.**

In a small skillet, heat the oil over medium and cook the blended paste for 3 to 5 minutes until it darkens and the oil separates from the solids.

**2. Awaken the whole spices.**

Toss the smashed lemongrass, ginger, galangal, bay leaves, lime leaves, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, and star anise into the hot skillet with the paste for 60 seconds until fragrant.

**3. Marry the flavors.**

Scrape the entire contents of the skillet into the gently simmering chicken broth and stir in the salt, sugar, and bouillon powder.

**4. Simmer until tender.**

Partially cover the pot and let it simmer on low for 35 to 45 minutes until the chicken is incredibly tender but not disintegrating off the bone.

**5. Assemble the bowl.**

Place chunks of chicken in a shallow bowl, ladle the roaring hot clear broth over the top, and customize heavily with celery leaves, scallions, fried shallots, a squeeze of lime, and sambal.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The secret to the village chicken texture.**

Pak Min uses ayam kampung, a tough, free-ranging village chicken that yields a chewy texture and deep golden broth; since standard American chicken breasts will turn to mush, bone-in skin-on thighs and wings are absolutely essential.

● **Customizing at the table is not optional.**

The unadorned broth is meant to be hit with fresh lime juice to cut the collagen, fried shallots for sweetness, and raw celery leaves to counter the warming spices.

- **Do not use European bay leaves.**

Indonesian bay leaves have a completely different, savory flavor profile; European bay leaves taste like pine and will ruin the dish, so omit them entirely if you cannot find the right ones at an Asian grocer.



# Wedang Ronde

*weh-dahng ron-deh*

When the Ohio winter winds howl and that bone-deep chill sets in, this is the ultimate maternal cure. Wedang Ronde is a brilliant collision of cultures: Chinese glutinous rice balls adopted by Javanese grandmothers, swimming in a deeply spiced, palm-sugar sweetened ginger tea. It is unpretentious, intensely comforting, and designed to clear the sinuses while warming the belly. The magic relies entirely on a few non-negotiable grandmotherly edicts: char the ginger before brewing to coax out its smooth, sweet heat, and mix the dough with warm water so it remains as pliable as clay.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1/2 lb</b>	fresh ginger root <i>unpeeled</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	creamy peanut butter
<b>6 cup</b>	water	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	glutinous rice flour
<b>1 cup</b>	coconut sugar	<b>2 tbsp</b>	tapioca flour
<b>1/4 cup</b>	granulated sugar	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	salt
<b>2 med</b>	lemongrass stalks <i>tough outer leaves removed and smashed</i>	<b>3/4 cup</b>	warm water
<b>3 med</b>	fresh or frozen pandan leaves <i>tied into a knot</i>	<b>1/8 tsp</b>	green liquid food coloring
<b>1 pinch</b>	salt	<b>1/8 tsp</b>	red liquid food coloring
<b>3/4 cup</b>	unsalted dry-roasted peanuts	<b>2 large</b>	soft white sandwich bread slices <i>crusts removed and diced into small cubes</i>
<b>3 tbsp</b>	granulated sugar	<b>1/4 cup</b>	roasted peanuts <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	salt		

## PREPARATION

- **Freeze assembled dumplings for emergency weeknight relief.**

Raw, fully assembled ronde freeze beautifully on a parchment-lined tray before being bagged. When a cold strikes, boil them straight from the freezer for a few extra minutes.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Char the ginger over an open flame.**

If you boil raw ginger, the broth will bite back with a bitter astringency. Place the unpeeled knobs directly on a gas burner grate or under a broiler for 5 to 8 minutes until the skin is blistered and blackened. Let cool slightly, rinse off the loose ash, and roughly smash them with a heavy pan.

**1. Brew the healing ginger broth.**

In a large pot, combine the charred smashed ginger, water, coconut sugar, 1/4 cup granulated sugar, lemongrass, pandan leaves, and a pinch of salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer uncovered for at least 30 minutes, straining before use.

**2. Process the peanut filling until compact.**

Pulse the 3/4 cup peanuts, 3 tablespoons sugar, and 1/4 teaspoon salt in a food processor until it resembles coarse, damp sand. Transfer to a bowl and work in the peanut butter so the mixture sticks together, then roll into tiny, blueberry-sized spheres.

**3. Mix the dough with warm water.**

Whisk together the glutinous rice flour, tapioca starch, and 1/4 teaspoon salt. Gradually pour in the warm water while kneading until the dough is smooth, pliable, and no longer sticky, then cover with a damp paper towel.

**4. Color and shape the rice balls.**

Divide the dough into three equal parts: leave one white, dye one green, and dye the last red. Flatten a marble-sized pinch of dough in your palm, place a peanut sphere in the center, and pinch shut, rolling smoothly between your palms.

**5. Boil the dumplings until they float.**

Drop the rice balls into a large pot of boiling water, giving them a gentle stir. Once they rise to the surface, let them cook for exactly two more minutes before transferring them directly into the warm ginger broth.

**6. Assemble and serve immediately.**

Ladle the hot broth and chewy dumplings into deep bowls, topping each generously with diced white bread and chopped peanuts to soak up the spicy elixir.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Never substitute regular rice flour for glutinous rice flour.**

Regular rice flour will create hard, chalky balls that disintegrate in the water. You must use glutinous sweet rice flour, commonly sold as Mochiko, to achieve the signature bounce and chew.

- **Embrace the white sandwich bread.**

Diced white bread might seem like an odd addition to an American palate, but it acts as a brilliant, unpretentious sponge for the intense ginger syrup.



## Soto Ayam Madura Super Cepat

When you came home shivering and exhausted, your mother didn't hand you a pill; she declared you had "Masuk Angin" and immediately put a pot on the stove. This is the real-deal Madurese Soto—no multi-hour simmering of an old village hen, just bone-in thighs for a rich stock in 45 minutes and a blender trick for the golden spice paste. We skip the earthy bay leaf to keep the ginger and lime aromas crystal clear, but the real secret is the Koya Kelapa, a magical hit of toasted coconut and garlic powder that melts in to thicken the bright yellow broth into pure, soulful medicine.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	bone-in skin-on chicken thighs	<b>1 tsp</b>	coriander powder
<b>8 1/2 cup</b>	cold water	<b>1/4 cup</b>	neutral oil
<b>3 oz</b>	raw shrimp <i>peeled</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	unsweetened shredded coconut
<b>2 med</b>	lemongrass stalks <i>tough outer layers removed, pounded hard to bruise</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	garlic powder
<b>6 med</b>	Makrut lime leaves <i>crumpled in your hands to release oils</i>	<b>3 cup</b>	cooked white rice <i>warm</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	sugar	<b>2 cup</b>	bean sprouts <i>rinsed and drained</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1 med</b>	glass noodles <i>soaked in boiling water for 5 minutes, drained</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	white pepper	<b>4 large</b>	eggs <i>hard-boiled, peeled, and halved</i>
<b>6 large</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	cabbage <i>finely shredded</i>
<b>5 med</b>	garlic cloves <i>peeled</i>	<b>2 med</b>	scallions <i>finely sliced</i>
<b>4 med</b>	macadamia nuts	<b>1/4 cup</b>	celery leaves <i>finely sliced</i>
<b>1 small</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and sliced</i>	<b>2 med</b>	limes <i>cut into wedges</i>
<b>1 small</b>	fresh turmeric <i>peeled</i>		

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Build the fortified stock.

Place the chicken thighs in a large, heavy-bottomed pot. Puree the raw shrimp with 1/2 cup of the cold water in a blender until completely smooth, then pour this into the pot with the remaining 8 cups of water. Bring to a gentle boil, skim any rising foam, and reduce to a simmer.

**1. Puree the spice paste without water.**

Rinse out your blender and add the shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, ginger, turmeric, and coriander. Pour the neutral oil directly in—do not add water—and blend until it forms a smooth, vibrant yellow paste.

**2. Fry the spices until the oil separates.**

Pour the blended paste into a cold skillet, set over medium heat, and toss in the bruised lemongrass and crumpled lime leaves. Sauté the paste until it deepens in color, shrinks, and the oil suddenly bubbles out from the solids. Do not rush this step, or the soup will taste like raw garlic.

**3. Marry the broth and spices.**

Scrape the entire contents of the skillet into the simmering chicken pot, add the sugar, salt, and white pepper, and simmer for another 25 minutes until the chicken is tender.

**4. Toast the coconut garnish.**

While the soup simmers, place the shredded coconut in a dry skillet over medium-low heat and stir continuously until it turns a deep golden brown. Remove from the heat immediately, toss with the garlic powder and a pinch of salt, let it cool, and crush it into a coarse powder.

**5. Shred the chicken.**

Pull the chicken from the broth and let cool slightly before pulling the meat from the bones and shredding it into bite-sized pieces. Taste the bright yellow broth and adjust the salt—it should be aggressively savory and deeply comforting.

**6. Build the bowls.**

Place a scoop of warm rice or glass noodles in each bowl and top with bean sprouts, shredded cabbage, shredded chicken, and a halved egg. Ladle the boiling broth over everything, scatter scallions and celery leaves on top, and finish with a squeeze of lime and a generous spoonful of the toasted coconut powder.



# Jamu Kunyit Asam & Teh Jahe

*jah-moo koon-yit ah-sahm & teh jah-heh*

When the Midwest winter chill sinks into your bones, bringing that heavy, aching lethargy Indonesians call masuk angin (trapped wind), a pill won't save you. You need grandmother's magic: a duo of potent, uncompromising elixirs designed to sweat out the cold and settle the stomach. First is Jamu Kunyit Asam, a tangy, earthy turmeric-tamarind potion that demands fresh roots and patience. The second is Teh Jahe (known traditionally as Wedang Jahe), an intensely spicy ginger brew that forces you to bypass watery American supermarket ginger by roasting it over an open flame and violently smashing it to extract every drop of essential oil. This isn't spa water; this is Javanese medicine, straight from the source.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>7 oz</b>	fresh turmeric root <i>washed and tough skin scraped</i>	<b>4 oz</b>	mature ginger root <i>left unpeeled</i>
<b>3 1/2 oz</b>	seedless tamarind paste	<b>2 stalks</b>	lemongrass <i>tough outer layers removed</i>
<b>10 oz</b>	palm sugar <i>roughly chopped, divided</i>	<b>10 cup</b>	water <i>divided</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt		

## PREPARATION

- **Protect your kitchen from turmeric stains.**

Fresh turmeric will permanently stain your hands, cutting boards, and counters a brilliant yellow. Wear gloves if you have a meeting tomorrow, and wash your blender immediately after use.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Pulverize the fresh turmeric for the Jamu.**

In a blender, combine the scraped turmeric roots with 2 cups of the water and blend on high until completely smooth.

- 2. Simmer the golden tonic to remove the raw bite.**

Transfer the puree to a medium pot with 4 more cups of the water, the tamarind paste, 8 ounces of the chopped palm sugar, and the kosher salt. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes to cook out the harsh, raw earthiness of the fresh root.

- 3. Strain and reserve the Jamu.**

Pass the hot liquid through a fine-mesh sieve lined with cheesecloth or a nut-milk bag into a large pitcher, pressing hard to extract all the liquid. Discard the solids. Serve hot to sweat out a cold, or chill to drink over ice.

**1. Begin the Teh Jahe by blistering the ginger over an open flame.**

Place the whole, unpeeled ginger directly onto your gas stove grate over a medium flame. Turn with tongs until blistered, slightly charred, and fragrant, about 5 minutes. This caramelizes the sugars and unlocks the deep, medicinal heat needed to compensate for mild American ginger.

**2. Scrape and violently smash the aromatics.**

Once cool enough to handle, scrape off the charred skin with the edge of a spoon—never a knife, which wastes the potent oils just beneath the skin. Place the ginger and the thick bottom halves of the lemongrass on a sturdy board and smack them hard with a heavy cleaver or mallet until splintered and flattened.

**3. Brew the ginger elixir.**

In a pot, combine the smashed ginger and lemongrass, the remaining 4 cups of water, and the remaining 2 ounces of palm sugar. Simmer gently for 20 minutes until the liquid turns deep amber, extracting every bit of fiery gingerol from the ruptured roots.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The secret to American supermarket ginger.**

American ginger (Jahe Gajah) is watery and mild compared to the fiery small roots of Indonesia. The 'bakar dan geprek' (roast and smash) method is absolutely mandatory here to extract enough heat and complexity for a proper cure.

● **Never use dried turmeric powder.**

Powdered turmeric will yield a gritty texture and completely lacks the vibrant, floral earthiness of the fresh rhizome. If you can't find fresh root at the market, don't make the Jamu.



# Bubur Ketan Hitam

*boo-boo keh-tan hee-tam*

When the Midwestern cold sets in, or the bone-deep weariness Indonesians call masuk angin takes hold, this is the potion mothers summon from the pantry. Bubur Ketan Hitam is less a porridge and more a warm, velvety embrace, a dramatic, midnight-purple pudding that is profoundly earthy and sweet. The genius lies in the contrast of a hot, dense bowl blanketed in aggressively salted, cool coconut cream that slices right through the sugar. Traditionally, grandmothers suffered over a hot stove for hours to coax out this texture, but armed with an electric pressure cooker or a clever thermal stovetop hack, you can recreate exactly what it tastes like back home on a freezing Tuesday night in Ohio.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 cup</b>	black glutinous rice <i>rinsed well</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	granulated sugar
<b>5 cup</b>	water	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt <i>divided</i>
<b>3 med</b>	fresh or frozen pandan leaves <i>tied into knots and divided</i>	<b>13 1/2 oz</b>	full-fat canned coconut milk <i>unshaken</i>
<b>1/2 cup</b>	dark palm sugar <i>roughly chopped</i>		

## PREPARATION

- **Wash and soak the rice.**

Place the black glutinous rice in a bowl, cover with cold water, agitate, and drain until the water runs mostly clear. Cover with a few inches of fresh water and let sit at room temperature for at least 4 hours, or ideally overnight, before draining well.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Pressure cook the rice and pandan.**

Add the drained, soaked rice, 5 cups of water, and two knotted pandan leaves to the inner pot of an electric pressure cooker. Secure the lid, set the valve to sealing, and cook on high pressure for 25 minutes.

- 2. Let the pressure release naturally.**

Allow the cooker to sit undisturbed for 15 minutes before carefully venting any remaining steam and opening the lid, ensuring the rice is tender and the liquid is deeply dark.

- 3. Sweeten and thicken the porridge.**

Discard the pandan leaves, set the cooker to saute on low, and stir in the palm sugar, granulated sugar, and 1/2 teaspoon of kosher salt. Cook, stirring constantly, for 5 to 10 minutes until the sugar dissolves and the mixture thickens into a glossy pudding.

**1. Prepare the salted coconut cream.**

While the porridge thickens, spoon the thickest cream from the top of the unshaken can of coconut milk into a small saucepan. Add the remaining 1/2 teaspoon of kosher salt and the last knotted pandan leaf, heating gently over medium-low and stirring just until the salt dissolves and the cream is hot without letting it boil.

**2. Serve with dramatic contrast.**

Ladle the hot porridge into deep bowls and crown each with a generous, swirling spoonful of the warm, salted coconut cream.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The golden rule of bubur ketan.**

Never add sugar to hard rice. Sugar binds to water, creating an osmotic trap that prevents hydration from penetrating the tough outer hull. If you add your palm sugar at the beginning, the rice will remain crunchy forever, so always cook the rice in plain water first until the grains burst open.

● **The homeland stovetop hack.**

If you don't have a pressure cooker, use the 5-30-7 method. Bring the soaked rice, water, and pandan to a rolling boil in a heavy pot for exactly 5 minutes. Turn off the heat, cover tightly, and leave entirely undisturbed for 30 minutes. Turn the heat back to medium-low, add the sugars and salt, and stir constantly for 7 minutes until thick.





# Kumpul Keluarga: Weekend Gatherings and Holidays

*Labor-of-love showstopper recipes designed for weekend potlucks, religious holidays, and family reunions.*

A proper Indonesian family gathering is a beautiful, chaotic collision of noise, smoke, and uncompromising flavor. It's the aunties commanding the kitchen, the slow, hypnotic reduction of spiced coconut milk, and the unmistakable char

of sweet soy hitting a hot grill. These aren't your quick Tuesday night dinners. These are the heavy hitters—the all-day rendang, the opor ayam synonymous with Eid, the satay meant to be eaten by the dozen.

Taking these sprawling, multi-generational feasts and wrestling them into a standard American kitchen doesn't mean diluting their soul. It just means trusting a heavy Dutch oven to do the work of a traditional open fire, and knowing exactly when the peanut sauce hits that perfect, oil-separating sweet spot. It's the food of celebration, demanded by blood and tradition, ready to be cooked exactly where you are.





## Rendang Daging Iris

Rendang isn't just a curry; it's a magnificent, slow-cooked act of devotion that usually demands an entire Sunday and a water buffalo. But the grandmothers of West Sumatra had a brilliant hack for when time was short: daging iris, or thinly sliced beef. By trading massive chunks for slender cuts and deploying ambu-ambu—a pitch-black paste of violently roasted coconut—you can cheat time. The meat tenderizes in ninety minutes, right as the coconut milk breaks and literally fries the beef in its own seasoned oils. It is the undisputed heavyweight champion of Indonesian feasts, engineered for an American weeknight without sacrificing an ounce of its soul.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	beef chuck roast <i>sliced 1/4-inch thick against the grain</i>	<b>3 med</b>	cardamom pods <i>gently crushed</i>
<b>13 1/2 oz</b>	full-fat coconut milk <i>unshaken, thick cream reserved</i>	<b>5 large</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>13 1/2 oz</b>	coconut cream	<b>6 large</b>	garlic cloves
<b>1 tbsp</b>	tamarind concentrate	<b>6 med</b>	red Fresno chilies <i>stemmed and seeded</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>3 med</b>	dried Guajillo chilies <i>soaked in hot water for 15 minutes, drained</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	palm sugar	<b>1 med</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and roughly chopped</i>
<b>1/2 cup</b>	unsweetened desiccated coconut	<b>1 large</b>	fresh galangal <i>peeled and roughly chopped</i>
<b>2 med</b>	lemongrass stalks <i>tough outer layers removed, pounded and knotted</i>	<b>1 med</b>	fresh turmeric <i>peeled and roughly chopped</i>
<b>5 med</b>	makrut lime leaves <i>central ribs removed</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	ground coriander
<b>3 med</b>	Indonesian bay leaves	<b>1 tsp</b>	ground cumin
<b>1 med</b>	cinnamon stick	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground nutmeg
<b>3 med</b>	star anise		

## PREPARATION

- **Toast the desiccated coconut to create the ambu-ambu.**

Place a dry skillet over medium-low heat and stir the coconut constantly for 5 to 7 minutes until it reaches a deep, espresso brown. Do not walk away; it burns fast. Immediately process it in a food processor until it releases its natural oils and forms a dark, damp paste.

- **Blend the bumbu halus spice paste.**

Combine the shallots, garlic, Fresno chilies, rehydrated Guajillo chilies, ginger, galangal, turmeric, coriander, cumin, and nutmeg in a blender. Add a splash of water or some of the reserved thick coconut cream to help the blades catch, pureeing until you have a smooth, vibrant orange-red paste.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Fry the spice paste to cook off the raw aromatics.**

In a large, heavy Dutch oven, heat 3 tablespoons of the reserved thick coconut cream over medium-high heat until it sizzles. Add the blended spice paste and cook for 8 to 10 minutes, stirring frequently until the oil separates.

- 2. Bloom the whole spices.**

Toss in the knotted lemongrass, makrut lime leaves, bay leaves, cinnamon stick, star anise, and cardamom pods, stirring for one minute until wildly fragrant.

- 3. Sear the thinly sliced beef.**

Add the beef to the pot, tossing to coat thoroughly in the spiced oil, and cook for 3 to 4 minutes until it loses its raw pink color.

- 4. Submerge the meat and simmer to the thick Kalio stage.**

Pour in the remaining coconut milk, coconut cream, tamarind paste, salt, palm sugar, and your dark ambu-ambu paste. Bring to a rolling simmer, drop the heat to medium-low, and simmer uncovered for an hour, stirring occasionally, until the liquid reduces to a thick brown gravy.

- 5. Fry the beef in the separated coconut oil until caramelized.**

Over the final 15 to 20 minutes, the liquid will evaporate entirely and the coconut fat will break. Stir continuously as the beef literally fries in this rich, spiced oil, turning a beautiful mahogany. Remove from the heat once the meat is highly tender and coated in the dry, oily spice mixture.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Patience pays dividends.**

Like all great stews, rendang tastes exponentially better the next day after the complex spices have had time to fully permeate the meat. Serve it warm, not piping hot, with steamed jasmine rice.

- **Stock your freezer with aromatics.**

Fresh galangal and makrut lime leaves can be hard to track down on a weeknight, but they freeze brilliantly. Buy them in bulk and stash them away so you can make authentic rendang on a whim.



# Udang Bakar Jimbaran

*oo-dang bah-kar jeem-bah-ran*

The smell of burning coconut husks and toasted shrimp paste drifting down Jimbaran Bay is a siren song. For families thousands of miles away in an Ohio suburb, recreating that chaotic, joyful weekend spread comes down to two grandmotherly secrets: pineapple and patience. Blending a small piece of fresh pineapple into the marinade tenderizes the prawns and kickstarts a furious caramelization under a hot broiler. But before it touches the seafood, you have to cook the spice paste until the oil separates—a technique called *tanak*—mellowing the raw garlic into a sweet, sticky lacquer that tastes exactly like home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	jumbo tiger prawns <i>shells on</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil
<b>1 med</b>	lime <i>juiced</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	tomato ketchup
<b>1 tsp</b>	salt	<b>1 tbsp</b>	oyster sauce
<b>1/2 med</b>	yellow onion <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	Indonesian chili sauce
<b>4 clove</b>	garlic <i>peeled</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	kecap manis
<b>3 large</b>	shallots <i>peeled</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	honey
<b>1/4 cup</b>	fresh pineapple <i>diced</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	brown sugar
<b>1 tsp</b>	terasi	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground white pepper
		<b>2 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter <i>melted</i>
		<b>1 med</b>	lime <i>cut into wedges</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Wash and butterfly the prawns.**

Leave the shells on to protect the delicate meat from intense heat. Slice down the back to butterfly, remove the dark vein, and toss with the juice of one lime and a pinch of salt to neutralize odors. Let sit for 10 minutes, then rinse and pat thoroughly dry.

- **Toast the shrimp paste.**

Never use raw terasi. Wrap the paste in a small piece of aluminum foil and toast in a dry skillet over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes per side until it emits a pungent, roasted aroma.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. **Blend the aromatics into a smooth paste.**

In a blender, combine the yellow onion, garlic, shallots, pineapple, toasted terasi, and neutral oil. Blend until perfectly smooth. Using oil instead of water helps it fry properly.

### 2. **Sauté the paste until the oil separates.**

Pour the paste into a skillet over medium heat. Stir frequently for 8 to 10 minutes until the moisture evaporates and the oil pools at the edges—a state known as *tanak*. This cooks out the raw allium bite, leaving only depth.

### 3. **Build the sticky glaze.**

Reduce the heat to low. Stir in the ketchup, oyster sauce, chili sauce, kecap manis, brown sugar, and white pepper. Simmer for 2 minutes until thick, then turn off the heat and stir in the honey.

### 4. **Blast the prawns under the broiler.**

Arrange the butterflied prawns shell-side down on a foil-lined baking sheet. Brush the meat generously with the glaze. Broil on high, about 4 inches from the heat, for 3 to 4 minutes.

### 5. **Baste, char, and serve.**

Pull the prawns out, hit them with melted butter and another dab of glaze, and broil for 1 to 2 more minutes. You want the shell edges charred and the sauce bubbling. Serve immediately with a mountain of rice and raw sambal.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **The magic of pineapple.**

Do not skip the fresh pineapple. Its enzymes rapidly tenderize the dense prawn meat, while the natural sugars guarantee those deeply caramelized, charred edges iconic to Jimbaran Bay.

- **Sourcing the right sauces.**

Seek out Bango or ABC brand Kecap Manis and ABC Saus Sambal at an Asian market. These specific bottled sauces form the unmistakable backbone of the authentic flavor profile.



# Sambal Goreng Kentang Udang

*sahm-bahl go-reng ken-tahng oo-dahng*

If you grew up in an Indonesian household, the smell of sambal goreng frying on the stove means one thing: family is coming over. A masterclass in balance, it cuts the earthy sweetness of palm sugar against the gentle heat of red chilies, rich coconut milk, and plump shrimp. The grandmother's secret here isn't a mystical ingredient, but patience—a technique called *pecah minyak*, where the spice paste is fried until the oil bleeds out, killing the raw bite of the alliums. To pull it off on a busy weeknight in America, we skip the mortar and pestle, blending the aromatics with oil to jumpstart the sizzle the second they hit the pan.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	Russet or Yukon Gold potatoes <i>peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	Thai shrimp paste or belacan
<b>2 cup</b>	neutral oil <i>reserved for frying</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral oil
<b>1/2 lb</b>	medium shrimp <i>peeled and deveined, tails left on</i>	<b>1 med stalk</b>	lemongrass <i>tough outer layers removed, bruised and knotted</i>
<b>4 large</b>	red Fresno chilies <i>stemmed and roughly chopped</i>	<b>3 med</b>	makrut lime leaves <i>bruised and torn slightly</i>
<b>1 to 3 small</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>stemmed</i>	<b>2 med</b>	Indonesian bay leaves
<b>1 large</b>	American shallot <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 med piece</b>	galangal <i>sliced into thin coins and bruised</i>
<b>4 large cloves</b>	garlic <i>peeled</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	canned full-fat coconut milk
<b>4 med</b>	macadamia nuts	<b>1 tbsp</b>	dark brown sugar
<b>1 small</b>	Roma tomato <i>quartered</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	tamarind concentrate <i>mixed with 1 tbsp water</i>
		<b>1 tsp</b>	mushroom or chicken bouillon
		<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt

## PREPARATION

- **Bruise your aromatics.**

Smacking the lemongrass and galangal coins with the back of your knife, and lightly tearing the lime leaves, releases their volatile essential oils so they can properly perfume the sauce.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. **Deep-fry the potatoes until golden and crisp.**

Searing them prevents the potatoes from turning into a mushy stew later. Heat about a half-inch of neutral oil in a wide skillet or wok over medium-high heat, frying the cubed potatoes in an even layer for 8 to 10 minutes. Remove with a slotted spoon to drain on paper towels, then carefully pour out all but two tablespoons of the oil from the skillet.

### 2. **Blend the spice paste with oil instead of water.**

Throw the Fresnos, Thai chilies, shallot, garlic, macadamia nuts, tomato, shrimp paste, and the three tablespoons of raw oil into a blender. Blitz until it forms a smooth, vibrant red paste; the oil prevents splattering and dramatically cuts down your cooking time.

### 3. **Sauté the aromatics until the oil breaks.**

Heat the reserved two tablespoons of oil in the skillet over medium. Pour in the blended paste and toss in the knotted lemongrass, lime leaves, bay leaves, and galangal. Stir frequently for 5 to 7 minutes until the paste darkens to a brick red and the oil visibly pools at the edges—a crucial technique known as *pecah minyak* that cooks out the raw bite of the alliums.

### 4. **Build the sauce and cook the shrimp.**

Add the shrimp and toss for about two minutes, just until they begin to turn pink. Pour in the coconut milk, brown sugar, tamarind mixture, and bouillon. Scrape up the caramelized bits from the bottom and let the sauce bubble and reduce for 3 to 4 minutes until it thickens. Taste and adjust the salt as needed.

### 5. **Fold in the crispy potatoes and serve.**

Add the potatoes back to the wok and gently toss for one minute so they are lacquered in the rich coconut sambal without losing their structure. Fish out the lemongrass, galangal, and whole leaves before serving immediately with warm jasmine rice.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Make the base paste in bulk.**

To make weeknights completely bulletproof, blend the shallots, garlic, chilies, and nuts with oil on a Sunday and sauté until the oil breaks. Store this bumbu dasar in an airtight jar in the fridge for up to two weeks, dropping a few tablespoons into the pan whenever you need a quick meal.

- **Swap the protein.**

If shrimp isn't your speed, the exact same method applies beautifully to fried tofu cubes, chicken liver and gizzards, or hard-boiled quail eggs.

- **Bring the funk.**

For a truly authentic holiday spread, toss in a half cup of halved stinky beans (petai) at the exact same time you add the shrimp.



# Ayam Bakar Ungkep Air Kelapa

*ah-yam bah-kar oong-kep ah-eer kuh-lah-pah*

If there's one scent that defines an Indonesian family weekend, it's the intoxicating smoke of dripping chicken fat hitting hot charcoal, mingling with caramelized sweet soy. The secret your grandmother knew isn't the grill—it's the ungkep, a masterclass in slow braising where coconut water acts as an enzymatic tenderizer and reduces into a sticky, sweet lacquer. By the time this chicken hits the flames, it's already perfectly cooked. The fire is just there to blister the skin and caramelize the sugars. It's a brilliant, foolproof technique that turns a quiet American backyard into a bustling Javanese street corner.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>3 1/2 lb</b>	bone-in skin-on chicken thighs and drumsticks	<b>1 small</b>	fresh galangal <i>cut into a 1-inch piece thickly sliced and bruised</i>
<b>2 cup</b>	pure coconut water <i>unsweetened</i>	<b>4 med</b>	kaffir lime leaves <i>midribs removed</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	tamarind concentrate <i>dissolved in 2 tbsp warm water</i>	<b>2 med</b>	Indonesian bay leaves
<b>5 tbsp</b>	Indonesian sweet soy sauce	<b>8 large</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	dark brown sugar	<b>5 large</b>	garlic cloves
<b>1 tsp</b>	salt	<b>4 med</b>	macadamia nuts <i>raw and unsalted</i>
<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil <i>divided</i>	<b>1 small</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled to yield a 1-inch piece</i>
<b>2 med</b>	lemongrass stalks <i>tough outer layers removed and bruised</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	ground coriander
		<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground turmeric
		<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground white pepper

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. Blend the spice paste.

In a food processor or blender, combine the shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, ginger, coriander, turmeric, and white pepper with 2 tablespoons of the oil. Blend until it forms a smooth, mustard-colored paste.

### 2. Sauté the aromatics until the oil separates.

Heat a large Dutch oven or heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat with the remaining 1 tablespoon of oil. Scrape in the spice paste and sauté constantly for 5 to 7 minutes. Add the lemongrass, galangal, kaffir lime leaves, and bay leaves, cooking until the raw onion smell dissipates and the oil begins to separate from the solids.

**1. Braise the chicken.**

Add the chicken pieces to the pot, tossing them in the fragrant paste until the outside changes color slightly. Pour in the coconut water, tamarind liquid, sweet soy sauce, brown sugar, and salt, bringing the liquid to a gentle boil before reducing the heat to medium-low, covering, and simmering for 30 minutes.

**2. Reduce the braising liquid into a lacquer.**

Remove the lid and turn the heat up to medium to evaporate the excess moisture. Stir gently so as not to tear the tender skin, cooking for another 15 to 20 minutes until the liquid reduces into a thick, glossy syrup that coats the back of a spoon, then turn off the heat.

**3. Char the chicken over high heat.**

Prepare a hot outdoor grill or a cast-iron grill pan on the stove over medium-high heat. Remove the chicken from the pot, letting excess syrup drip off, and grill for 3 to 5 minutes per side just to blister the skin and caramelize the sugars. Brush generously with the leftover syrupy braising liquid from the pot as it cooks.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **The macadamia nut trick.**

Macadamia nuts are the perfect American substitute for Javanese candlenuts, providing the essential waxy fat emulsion that thickens the braising liquid.

● **Blend with oil, not water.**

Using oil in the food processor ensures the spice paste fries rather than boils when it hits the hot pan, unlocking much deeper aromatics.

● **Make it ahead.**

You can stop after the braising step and store the chicken in its syrup overnight in the fridge. The flavors deepen, and cold chicken holds together beautifully on the grill the next day.



# Sayur Labu Siam Ebi

*sah-yoor lah-boo see-ahm eh-bee*

If you grew up in an Indonesian-American household, this bright orange coconut stew is the smell that woke you up on Eid al-Fitr. Sayur Labu Siam is the luxurious, umami-rich soul of a family gathering, meant to be spooned generously over compressed rice cakes. The secret to your grandmother's uncompromised flavor? She didn't skip the details. She soaked her dried shrimp to create an umami bomb, she salted her chayote to strip the bitter sap, and she stood by the stove coddling the coconut milk so it stayed perfectly silky. We've traded hard-to-find candlenuts for raw macadamia nuts and swapped the stone mortar for a food processor, but we haven't lost an ounce of that authentic, nostalgic Betawi magic.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 med</b>	chayote squash <i>peeled, seeded, and cut into 1/4-inch matchsticks</i>	<b>1 small piece</b>	fresh turmeric <i>peeled</i>
<b>2 1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt <i>divided</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	shrimp paste
<b>1/2 lb</b>	yardlong beans or green beans <i>cut into 2-inch pieces</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	neutral oil
<b>14 oz</b>	firm tofu <i>cut into 1-inch cubes and lightly pan-fried</i>	<b>3 tbsp</b>	dried shrimp <i>soaked in hot water for 10 minutes, drained, and finely minced</i>
<b>4 large</b>	eggs <i>hard-boiled and peeled</i>	<b>2 med stalk</b>	lemongrass <i>bruised and tied in a knot</i>
<b>3 large</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 small piece</b>	galangal <i>thickly sliced and bruised</i>
<b>5 med clove</b>	garlic <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>3 med</b>	Indonesian salam leaves
<b>4 large</b>	Fresno chilies <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>13.5 oz</b>	full-fat coconut milk <i>unshaken, thick cream separated from the thinner milk</i>
<b>3 med</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>stemmed</i>	<b>3 cup</b>	low-sodium chicken broth
<b>4 med</b>	raw macadamia nuts	<b>1 tbsp</b>	palm sugar or dark brown sugar
		<b>1/2 tsp</b>	white pepper

## PREPARATION

- **Hydrate the dried shrimp.**

Soak the dried shrimp in hot water for 10 minutes to rehydrate them, then drain and mince them finely so they melt into the broth.

- **Extract the sap from the chayote.**

Place the chayote matchsticks in a colander, sprinkle with 1 teaspoon of kosher salt, and gently massage for about a minute until a white sap releases. Rinse thoroughly under cold water and drain.

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1. Blend the flavor base into a smooth paste.**

In a food processor, combine the shallots, garlic, Fresno chilies, Thai chilies, macadamia nuts, turmeric, shrimp paste, and the neutral oil. Blend until it forms a vibrant orange paste.

**2. Bloom the spices in a dry pot over medium heat.**

Scrape the paste into a large heavy-bottomed pot and cook, stirring constantly, for 5 to 7 minutes until the color deepens, the raw onion smell disappears, and the oil begins to separate from the paste.

**3. Build the aromatic broth.**

Add the minced dried shrimp, lemongrass, galangal, and salam leaves, sautéing for two minutes until incredibly fragrant. Pour in the thin coconut milk and chicken broth, then bring to a gentle boil.

**4. Simmer the stew with the vegetables and proteins.**

Add the rinsed chayote, yardlong beans, palm sugar, the remaining 1 1/2 teaspoons of salt, and white pepper. Lower the heat and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes until the vegetables are tender, then stir in the fried tofu and hard-boiled eggs.

**5. Coddle the coconut cream to finish the dish.**

Turn the heat down to low and stir in the reserved thick coconut cream. Stir gently and continuously for 3 to 5 minutes as the broth heats back up, ensuring it does not boil so the milk stays silky and doesn't curdle.

## CHEF'S NOTES

● **Macadamia nuts are the perfect stand-in for candlenuts.**

Candlenuts (kemiri) are traditional but notoriously hard to find fresh in the States. Raw macadamias provide the exact same waxy texture and rich, nutty flavor necessary to thicken the stew.

- **Do not substitute salam leaves with Western bay leaves.**

Western laurel bay leaves have a completely different, piney flavor profile that will ruin the dish. If you cannot find Indonesian salam leaves at an Asian grocer, omit them entirely.



# Sate Ayam Madura

*sah-tay ah-yam mah-doo-rah*

The smell of sweet soy sauce caramelizing over an open flame is a visceral trigger—it smells like weekends, family gatherings, and home. While Thai satay gets the global glory, Sate Madura is the undisputed king of the archipelago. The secret isn't in a complicated marinade; it's entirely in the peanut sauce. You have to fry the nuts and aromatics first, then simmer the paste slowly until the natural oils literally bleed to the surface. It takes patience, but it's the absolute line between a cheap imitation and a skewer that tastes exactly like the streets of East Java.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 lb</b>	boneless skinless chicken thighs <i>cut into 1/2-inch cubes</i>	<b>3 med</b>	large red chilies <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh lime juice	<b>2 med</b>	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>1 1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>5 tbsp</b>	vegetable oil
<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	raw unsalted peanuts	<b>2 1/2 cup</b>	water
<b>4 med</b>	raw macadamia nuts	<b>3 tbsp</b>	dark brown sugar
<b>5 small</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>7 tbsp</b>	kecap manis
<b>4 med clove</b>	garlic <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>3 med</b>	makrut lime leaves <i>torn</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Soak your skewers.**

Submerge twenty to twenty-five bamboo skewers in water for at least forty-five minutes before threading the meat so they do not incinerate on the grill.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Prep the protein.**

Toss the cubed chicken with the lime juice and a half teaspoon of the salt, then cover and refrigerate for thirty minutes to let the mild acid tenderize the meat.

- 2. Fry the sauce base.**

Heat four tablespoons of the vegetable oil in a heavy skillet over medium heat, then fry the peanuts, macadamia nuts, shallots, garlic, and chilies until golden and highly aromatic.

**1. Blend the aromatics.**

Use a slotted spoon to transfer the fried solids to a blender with a half cup of the water, blending into a smooth paste while leaving the infused frying oil behind in the skillet.

**2. Simmer until the oil separates.**

Return the paste to the skillet along with the remaining two cups of water, dark brown sugar, four tablespoons of the kecap manis, lime leaves, and the remaining teaspoon of salt. Bring to a gentle boil, then drop the heat to low and simmer uncovered for thirty minutes; you will know it is ready when a layer of reddish-orange oil bleeds out and pools on the surface.

**3. Skewer and glaze the meat.**

Thread four to five pieces of chicken tightly onto each soaked bamboo skewer, then roll them in a thick glaze made from a half cup of the finished peanut sauce, the remaining three tablespoons of kecap manis, and the remaining tablespoon of oil.

**4. Grill to caramelize.**

Grill the skewers over medium-high heat for about six to eight minutes, turning frequently and basting with any leftover glaze. The heavy sugar content in the kecap manis will aggressively caramelize, creating the necessary sticky, blackened char on the edges of the meat.

**5. Serve immediately.**

Plate the hot skewers covered generously in the remaining warm peanut sauce, garnished with crispy fried shallots and a squeeze of fresh lime.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Macadamia nuts are the perfect stand-in for candlenuts.**

Authentic Indonesian cooking relies on candlenuts (kemiri) for thickening, but they require careful cooking to remove their mild toxicity. Raw macadamias offer the exact same lipid profile and creamy richness without the risk.



# Tumpeng Mini Kuning

*toom-pung mee-nee koo-neeng*

In Indonesia, a towering cone of brilliant yellow rice is more than a meal; it is a sacred monument to gratitude and community. For the diaspora cook chasing the nostalgic aromas of a Javanese celebration without wrestling a massive steamer on a weeknight, this miniaturized version captures the exact spiritual and culinary essence of the classic using a standard rice cooker. Built on a freshly bruised aromatic base, fortified with glutinous rice for structural integrity, and brightened with a grandmother's secret splash of lime juice, this glossy, coconut-infused mountain is a perfect, uncompromised homage to home.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 cup</b>	Jasmine rice <i>washed until water runs clear</i>	<b>1 stalk</b>	lemongrass <i>tough outer layers removed, pounded flat, and tied into a knot</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	glutinous rice <i>washed</i>	<b>3 med</b>	Indonesian bay leaves
<b>4 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>3 med</b>	kaffir lime leaves <i>central stems torn out</i>
<b>3 med clove</b>	garlic <i>peeled</i>	<b>1 med</b>	pandan leaf <i>tied into a knot</i>
<b>1 med piece</b>	fresh turmeric <i>peeled</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	full-fat coconut milk
<b>2 med</b>	candlenuts or raw macadamia nuts	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	water or low-sodium chicken broth
<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>1 tsp</b>	kosher salt
		<b>1/2 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder
		<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh lime juice

## PREPARATION

- **Prepare your side dishes in advance.**

A true tumpeng is never served alone. To make this feasible on a weeknight, utilize the ungekup method by boiling your chicken in seasoned broth days ahead, leaving only a quick deep fry for the night of the meal.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Process the shallots, garlic, turmeric, and candlenuts with the oil into a smooth paste.**

This bumbu halus is the foundational flavor of the dish; blending it fresh prevents the harsh, metallic taste of powdered turmeric.

- 1. Sauté the spice paste with the lemongrass, Indonesian bay leaves, and kaffir lime leaves over medium heat for three to five minutes.**

Cook until the paste darkens slightly and the kitchen smells intensely floral.

Skipping this step and adding raw paste to the rice cooker is the most common mistake made in Western adaptations.

- 2. Scrape the sautéed paste and leaves into the rice cooker over the washed Jasmine and glutinous rice.**

Stir in the coconut milk, broth, salt, bouillon, and the fresh lime juice. The acid from the lime interacts with the turmeric to create an intensely bright, glossy yellow color that will not oxidize.

- 3. Cook on the standard white rice setting, then let it rest undisturbed for fifteen minutes after it switches to warm.**

Leaving the lid closed allows the steam to redistribute perfectly, ensuring the grains become fluffy and sticky rather than wet and gummy.

- 4. Remove the aromatic leaves, fluff the rice gently, and pack it tightly into a conical mold or wide kitchen funnel while still hot.**

Invert the cone onto the center of a serving platter and surround it with traditional sides like shredded omelet, sweet soy tempeh, and fried chicken.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **Do not substitute Western bay leaves for daun salam.**

Indonesian bay leaf has an earthy, subtle aroma entirely different from the piney Mediterranean variety; if you cannot find it frozen or dried at an Asian market, omit it completely.

- **Use a small amount of glutinous rice as mortar.**

Mixing a few tablespoons of sweet sticky rice into the Jasmine rice is the native secret to ensuring your tumpeng holds its sharp conical shape without crumbling on the plate.



# The Indo-Dutch Heritage: Diaspora Comfort Food

*A nod to the layered colonial history of the diaspora, featuring unique fusion dishes that preserve specific family memories for those who immigrated via the Netherlands.*

History leaves its mark on the plate. For the Indo-Dutch diaspora—those who packed their lives into trunks, traded the tropics for the damp chill of the Netherlands, and eventually made port in American suburbs—that mark is a

distinctly unapologetic comfort food. It's the collision of colonial dairy with the deep, resonant funk of sweet soy and nutmeg. This isn't restaurant food. It's survival, adaptation, and memory, stubbornly baked into a casserole dish.

You won't find Macaroni Schotel on a tourist menu in Bali. But you will find it at every diaspora family gathering, sitting shoulder-to-shoulder with a sticky, trembling pot of Babi Kecap and a towering stack of golden Perkedel Kentang. These are the hybrid dishes of displacement—a testament to the grandmothers who learned to navigate foreign supermarket aisles while fiercely protecting the soul of the homeland.





## Perkedel Kentang Kornek

If there is a smell that instantly grounds a first-generation Indonesian-American in the kitchen of their youth, it is the deeply savory, buttery aroma of perkedel frying in a hot wok. Born of Dutch colonial history and local ingenuity, these fritters stretch a humble spoonful of canned corned beef into a celebratory feast. But if you've tried making them with a standard Western croquette recipe, you have likely watched your potatoes violently disintegrate into the oil. The uncompromising grandmother's secret is simple: never boil the potatoes. Frying them raw concentrates the starch and keeps the dough bone-dry, guaranteeing a perfect, golden crust every single time.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 lb</b>	Russet potatoes <i>peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	salt
<b>2 cup</b>	cooking oil	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground white pepper
<b>4 med</b>	shallots <i>thinly sliced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground nutmeg
<b>3 med</b>	garlic cloves <i>thinly sliced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder
<b>1/3 cup</b>	canned corned beef	<b>1 large</b>	egg yolk
<b>2 tbsp</b>	Chinese celery leaves <i>finely chopped</i>	<b>1 large</b>	egg <i>lightly beaten</i>
		<b>1 large</b>	egg white <i>lightly beaten</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Prepare the egg wash.**

In a shallow bowl, lightly beat the whole egg and the extra egg white together with a small pinch of salt.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Fry the aromatics to build a sweet, caramelized foundation.**

In a small skillet, heat two tablespoons of oil over medium-low heat. Fry the shallots until highly fragrant and light golden brown, adding the garlic in the last minute so it doesn't burn. Drain from the oil and set aside.

- 2. Fry the raw potatoes to guarantee structural integrity.**

In a wok or deep skillet, heat about two inches of oil to 350°F. Carefully drop in the cubed potatoes and fry for 8 to 10 minutes until fork-tender with a golden crust. Frying keeps the potatoes dry; boiling forces water into the tuber, which will turn to steam and cause your fritters to explode later.

**1. Mash the potatoes immediately while they are still steaming hot.**

Use a potato masher or a sturdy fork to mash them until smooth but retaining a tiny bit of texture. Do not use a food processor, which will violently overwork the starches and turn them into unworkable glue.

**2. Season the dough and bind it with the egg yolk.**

Fold the fried aromatics, corned beef, celery leaves, salt, white pepper, nutmeg, and bouillon powder into the hot potatoes. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. Once it has cooled slightly, knead in the egg yolk until evenly distributed.

**3. Shape the mixture into thick, uniform patties.**

Scoop about two tablespoons of the dough, roll it into a neat ball in your hands, and gently press it into a disk roughly 2 inches wide and 3/4-inch thick.

**4. Seal the fritters with egg wash and fry until deeply golden.**

Dip each patty into the prepared egg wash mixture to create a protective protein seal. Gently slide them into the hot frying oil, cooking 2 to 3 minutes per side and flipping only once to protect the delicate crust.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

● **Chill the shaped dough for absolute insurance.**

If you have the time, resting the shaped patties in the refrigerator for 20 to 30 minutes before frying helps the starches firm up, ensuring they will absolutely not break apart in the wok.

● **Respect the starch.**

Do not substitute waxy red or fingerling potatoes for this recipe. They lack the necessary starch and hold too much water to bind properly.



# Bistik Jawa Iris

*bees-teek jah-wah ee-rees*

Bistik Jawa is the ultimate child of culinary diplomacy, born when Dutch colonizers brought their thick beefsteaks and Worcestershire sauce to the Indonesian archipelago, only to have local Javanese cooks wisely adapt it to their own palates. The secret to making this tender, sweet-and-savory masterpiece work on a busy Tuesday in Ohio is to ditch the thick steak entirely. By slicing a sirloin incredibly thin against the grain, searing it in butter, and braising it in a glossy sauce of sweet soy, Worcestershire, and freshly grated nutmeg, you get exactly what a Sunday lunch in Solo tastes like—ready in under an hour.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 lb</b>	beef sirloin <i>sliced against the grain into 1/4-inch strips</i>	<b>3 med clove</b>	garlic <i>finely minced</i>
<b>1 tsp</b>	fresh nutmeg <i>grated</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	low-sodium beef broth
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	white pepper <i>ground</i>	<b>1 small</b>	tomato <i>cut into wedges</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>2 cup</b>	frozen crinkle-cut fries <i>cooked according to package instructions</i>
<b>5 tbsp</b>	kecap manis <i>divided</i>	<b>1 cup</b>	frozen green beans <i>steamed</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	Worcestershire sauce <i>divided</i>	<b>2 med</b>	carrots <i>peeled, cut into sticks, and steamed</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter	<b>2 large</b>	eggs <i>hard-boiled and halved</i>
<b>4 med</b>	shallots <i>finely minced</i>	<b>2 tbsp</b>	fried shallots <i>for garnish</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Slice the beef across the grain.**

Place the steak in the freezer for 20 minutes before cutting. This firms up the meat and allows for paper-thin slices against the grain, ensuring the quick-braise method yields melt-in-your-mouth beef.

- **Marinate the meat.**

In a medium bowl, massage the beef slices with the nutmeg, white pepper, salt, 2 tablespoons of kecap manis, and 1 tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce. Let sit at room temperature for 15 to 30 minutes before cooking.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. **Sear the aromatics and marinated beef in butter.**

Heat a large, heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high heat and melt the butter until foamy. Sauté the minced shallots and garlic until fragrant, about 2 minutes, then add the beef slices in a single layer. Sear until the edges caramelize to a deep, dark brown—the sugars in the sweet soy sauce should stick to the pan.

### 2. **Deglaze the pan and build the gravy.**

Pour in the beef broth to deglaze, scraping up all the deeply flavored brown bits from the pan. Stir in the remaining 3 tablespoons of kecap manis, the remaining 1 tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce, and the tomato wedges.

### 3. **Reduce the sauce to a glossy glaze.**

Bring the liquid to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer uncovered for 15 to 20 minutes. The beef will become incredibly tender as the sauce reduces into a rich, dark gravy.

### 4. **Plate with classic Indo-Dutch sides.**

Arrange a bed of steamed carrots, green beans, and crispy fries on each plate, topped with half a hard-boiled egg. Spoon the beef and its gravy generously over the top and finish with a heavy handful of crispy fried shallots.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Hacking the sweet soy sauce.**

If you can't find kecap manis in the international aisle, simply simmer half a cup of regular soy sauce with half a cup of dark brown sugar until it reaches a syrupy consistency.

- **Don't skimp on fresh nutmeg.**

Pre-ground nutmeg loses its volatile oils quickly on supermarket shelves. A whole nutmeg and a microplane are the absolute secrets to recreating the exact olfactory memory of an Indonesian grandmother's kitchen.

- **Embrace frozen vegetables.**

Don't feel guilty about using frozen crinkle-cut fries and green beans on a weeknight. The magic of this dish lies entirely in the spiced beef gravy; the sides are merely vessels for soaking it up.



# Sup Brenebon Sosis

*soop breh-neh-bon soh-sees*

In the Indo-Dutch diaspora, winter comfort food means the smell of nutmeg and cloves wafting through the house. Sup Brenebon traces its lineage to a Dutch colonial brown bean soup, but Indonesian grandmothers quickly realized the European version needed a tropical upgrade. They swapped brown beans for local red kidney beans and heavily spiced the broth with the treasures of the Spice Islands. Traditionally, this requires boiling pork trotters for half the day, but diaspora moms adapted. Relying on the ultimate weeknight secret of high-quality smoked sausage and canned kidney beans, you can

recreate the profound, sweet-and-savory spiced broth of an authentic Manadonese Christmas right in your American kitchen in under 45 minutes.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral oil	<b>1 large</b>	carrot <i>peeled and diced</i>
<b>1 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter	<b>6 cup</b>	beef or chicken broth
<b>14 oz</b>	smoked sausage <i>sliced into 1/2-inch rounds</i>	<b>30 oz</b>	dark red kidney beans <i>rinsed and drained</i>
<b>4 med</b>	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	sugar
<b>4 large</b>	garlic cloves <i>smashed</i>	<b>to taste</b>	kosher salt
<b>1 tsp</b>	white peppercorns	<b>2 med</b>	scallions <i>sliced crosswise</i>
<b>1/2 tsp</b>	freshly grated nutmeg	<b>1 cup</b>	Chinese celery leaves <i>roughly chopped</i>
<b>5</b>	whole cloves	<b>1/4 cup</b>	fried shallots

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Pound the shallots, garlic, and white peppercorns into a rough paste.**  
Use a mortar and pestle or a small food processor. If you lack these, finely mince them and mash the pile against your cutting board with the side of your knife.
- 2. Brown the sliced sausage in the oil and butter over medium-high heat.**  
Let the rendered fat coat the bottom of the pot—this is the foundation of the soup's flavor. After 4 to 5 minutes, remove the sausage with a slotted spoon, leaving the fat behind in the pot.
- 3. Sauté the shallot-garlic paste in the rendered fat until highly fragrant, then bloom the spices.**  
Lower the heat to medium and cook the paste for 2 to 3 minutes to kill the raw edge, then stir in the grated nutmeg and whole cloves for 30 seconds.

- 1. Pour in the broth and return the sausage to the pot along with the diced carrot, sugar, and a pinch of salt.**

Scrape up any browned bits from the bottom. Bring to a gentle boil, then lower the heat, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes to marry the flavors and soften the carrots.
- 2. Add the rinsed beans to the pot, mashing a small ladleful to thicken the broth naturally.**

Scooping out about half a cup of beans and broth to mash and stir back in perfectly mimics the starchy texture of a soup that's been bubbling all day. Simmer uncovered for 10 more minutes.
- 3. Turn off the heat and immediately stir in the scallions and celery leaves.**

The residual heat cooks the tender greens perfectly without destroying their vibrant color or pungent bite. Taste and adjust for salt, then serve generously topped with crispy fried shallots.

#### CHEF'S NOTES

- **The Spice Bloom**

Authentic Indonesian soups rarely just boil spices in water. Always pound the aromatics into a paste and cook them in the fat first, then add the nutmeg and cloves to the hot oil to release their essential oils before adding the broth.

- **The Texture Trick**

To achieve the thick, hearty body of a soup that has been simmering all day without adding flour or cornstarch, mash a ladleful of the cooked beans with a fork and stir them right back into the pot.

- **The Celery Rule**

In Indonesian soups, celery is treated as a leafy herb rather than a crunchy vegetable base. Use only the leafy tops or Chinese celery, stirred in at the very last minute to maintain their bright flavor.



# Huzarensla

*hoo-ZAR-en-slah*

If there is one dish that instantly teleports an Indo-Dutch kid back to a crowded suburban kitchen on New Year's Eve, it is Huzarensla. Born in Europe, adapted in the tropical heat of the Dutch East Indies, and perfected in the American diaspora, this stunning pink potato salad is a beautiful collision of savory beef, earthy beets, sweet pineapple, and tart green apples. While purists historically spent hours stewing beef, a working grandmother knew that relying on high-quality deli roast beef and the tangy sweetness of Miracle Whip captures that exact, nostalgic homeland flavor in a fraction of the time.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>2 lb</b>	Yukon Gold potatoes <i>peeled and cut into 1/4-inch cubes</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	cornichons <i>finely chopped</i>
<b>1 large</b>	carrot <i>peeled and finely diced</i>	<b>4 large</b>	eggs <i>hard-boiled and peeled</i>
<b>1 cup</b>	sweet peas <i>thawed if frozen or drained if canned</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	mayonnaise
<b>1/2 lb</b>	thick-cut deli roast beef <i>cut into 1/4-inch cubes</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	Miracle Whip
<b>2 med</b>	vacuum-sealed cooked beets <i>cut into 1/4-inch cubes</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	Dijon mustard
<b>1 med</b>	Granny Smith apple <i>peeled, cored, and finely diced</i>	<b>1 tbsp</b>	pickle juice
<b>1 cup</b>	canned pineapple chunks <i>drained well and roughly chopped</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	granulated sugar
<b>1/2 cup</b>	cocktail onions <i>drained and halved</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	ground white pepper
		<b>to taste</b>	salt
		<b>1 head</b>	Romaine or Butter lettuce <i>leaves separated</i>

## PREPARATION

- **Order the right cut at the deli.**

Ask your local deli counter for a single half-inch thick slice of quality roast beef. This makes it incredibly easy to dice into the perfect quarter-inch cubes.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Boil the root vegetables until just fork-tender.**

Bring a large, generously salted pot of water to a boil. Cook the potatoes and carrots for 8 to 10 minutes, dropping in the peas during the last minute, then drain thoroughly and spread on a baking sheet to cool.

- 2. Press the excess moisture from the fruit.**

Wrap the diced apple and pineapple in a paper towel and gently press to absorb excess juice and prevent a watery salad.

**1. Separate and prepare the hard-boiled eggs.**

Slice two eggs and reserve them in the fridge for garnish. Separate the yolks and whites of the remaining two; finely chop the whites and place the yolks in a small bowl.

**2. Create the velvety dressing.**

Mash the reserved egg yolks completely smooth with a fork, then whisk in the mayonnaise, Miracle Whip, Dijon mustard, pickle juice, sugar, and white pepper.

**3. Combine the salad base.**

In a large mixing bowl, toss the cooled potatoes, carrots, peas, beef, beets, apple, pineapple, cocktail onions, chopped cornichons, and chopped egg whites.

**4. Fold in the dressing and chill.**

Pour the dressing over the top and gently fold from the bottom up until the beet juice turns everything a beautiful pastel pink. Cover tightly and refrigerate for at least two hours, or ideally overnight, to let the starches absorb the flavors.

**5. Plate and serve.**

Line a wide platter with crisp lettuce leaves, scoop the chilled salad into the center in a neat dome, and garnish with the reserved sliced eggs and a few extra cornichons.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Embrace the Miracle Whip.**

Using a fifty-fifty blend of mayonnaise and Miracle Whip is the ultimate diaspora secret to mimicking traditional Dutch slasaus, providing the perfect sweet-and-sour tension that standard mayonnaise lacks.

● **White pepper is essential.**

White pepper provides the authentic flavor backbone for this dish and many others from the region. Avoid substituting black pepper if at all possible.



# Skillet Macaroni Schotel

*mah-kah-ROH-nee SKOH-tuhl TEH-flahn*

Long before macaroni and cheese came out of a blue box, Indonesian mothers were making Makaroni Schotel. A rich, savory remnant of the Dutch colonial era, the bake was eagerly adopted and remixed with local spices by native cooks. Rather than fussing with a long oven bake, resourceful households perfected the "teflon" method—a stovetop technique using a covered non-stick skillet that creates a beautiful, caramelized cheese crust without heating up the kitchen. For first-generation kids growing up in the States, this tastes exactly like a Saturday afternoon at home. The secret lies in a tin of canned corned

beef for a hit of deep, savory umami, and a heavy pinch of ground nutmeg—the native Indonesian spice that transforms a standard pasta bake into something distinctly, wonderfully Indo-Dutch.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>8 oz</b>	dry elbow macaroni	<b>1 tbsp</b>	all-purpose flour
<b>1 tbsp</b>	vegetable oil	<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	sharp cheddar cheese <i>freshly grated and divided</i>
<b>2 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter	<b>1 tsp</b>	ground nutmeg
<b>1/2 med</b>	yellow onion <i>finely chopped</i>	<b>1 tsp</b>	chicken bouillon powder
<b>3 med clove</b>	garlic <i>minced</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	kosher salt
<b>6 oz</b>	canned corned beef <i>crumbled</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	black pepper
<b>3 large</b>	eggs	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	sugar
<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	whole milk	<b>1/2 cup</b>	mozzarella cheese <i>shredded</i>
		<b>1 tsp</b>	dried parsley

## PREPARATION

- **Grate your own cheese.**

Do not use pre-shredded cheese from a bag. It is coated in anti-caking agents that will prevent it from melting properly into the custard.

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. **Par-boil the macaroni.**

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil, add the vegetable oil and macaroni, and cook for 6 to 7 minutes until al dente. Drain and rinse briefly with cold water to stop the cooking; the pasta must retain a slight bite because it will finish cooking in the skillet.

**1. Whisk the custard together.**

In a medium mixing bowl, vigorously whisk the eggs, whole milk, and flour until no lumps remain. Stir in 1 cup of the grated cheddar cheese, the nutmeg, bouillon powder, salt, black pepper, and sugar, then set aside.

**2. Build the aromatic base.**

Place a 10-inch non-stick skillet with a tight-fitting lid over medium heat and melt the butter. Sauté the chopped onion and minced garlic for 2 to 3 minutes until translucent and fragrant.

**3. Render the beef.**

Add the corned beef to the skillet, using a wooden spoon to break it apart. Cook for 3 to 4 minutes until the fat renders out and the meat gets slightly crispy at the edges.

**4. Toss the pasta in the fat.**

Reduce the heat to medium-low, add the drained macaroni to the skillet, and toss it thoroughly with the onion and beef mixture to coat the pasta in the savory fats.

**5. Submerge the macaroni in the custard.**

Pour the milk and egg mixture evenly over the macaroni and press down gently with a spatula to ensure the pasta is submerged. Critically, reduce your stove to the lowest possible heat setting right now.

**6. Cover and cook on low.**

Sprinkle the remaining half cup of cheddar cheese and the mozzarella evenly over the top, place the lid tightly on the skillet, and cook undisturbed for 12 to 15 minutes. The trapped steam gently sets the eggs and melts the cheese on top, while the bottom forms a highly desirable golden crust.

**7. Rest and serve directly from the pan.**

Remove the skillet from the heat and let it rest for 5 minutes with the lid off to allow the custard to firm up. Garnish with dried parsley, cut into wedges directly in the pan, and serve warm.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Never skip the nutmeg.**

The sharp umami of the corned beef combined with the sweet warmth of the nutmeg is the defining characteristic of Indo-Dutch cuisine and the single most vital component to achieving authentic flavor here.

- **Control your heat.**

Every stove is different. If your burner runs hot even on its lowest setting, move the skillet partially off the heat source. You want to gently steam the eggs without scorching the bottom crust.

- **Keep the sweet chili sauce handy.**

In Indonesia, this dish is almost exclusively eaten with a healthy drizzle of sweet chili sauce (Saus Sambal) or tomato ketchup added right before taking a bite.



# Babi Kecap Cepat

In the Indo-Dutch diaspora, Oma's legendary sweet soy braised pork was a multi-hour affair, but first-generation kids have weeknight realities. This is the authentic evolution: sliced thin, rendered hard and fast, and glazed in thick, molasses-like kecap manis. It delivers the soul of a slow stew in under thirty minutes. The real secret—the trick that cuts the fat and makes it taste exactly like home—is that final, unapologetic hit of fresh lime juice off the heat.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 lb</b>	pork shoulder <i>cut into thin 1/2-inch strips</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground white pepper
<b>1/2 lb</b>	pork belly slices <i>cut into 1-inch pieces</i>	<b>1/2 tsp</b>	ground ginger
		<b>3 tbsp</b>	soy sauce <i>divided</i>

<b>1 tbsp</b>	neutral cooking oil	<b>1 tsp</b>	sambal oelek
<b>1 large</b>	yellow onion <i>roughly chopped</i>	<b>1/2 cup</b>	kecap manis
<b>4 clove</b>	garlic <i>finely minced</i>	<b>1/4 tsp</b>	nutmeg <i>freshly grated</i>
<b>1 inch</b>	fresh ginger <i>peeled and cut into matchsticks</i>	<b>1/4 cup</b>	water
		<b>1 tbsp</b>	fresh lime juice

## PREPARATION

- **Marinate the pork.**

In a medium bowl, toss the pork shoulder and pork belly with the white pepper, ground ginger, and 1 tablespoon of the soy sauce, leaving it to sit at room temperature for 10 minutes while you prep the vegetables.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Render the pork fat over high heat.**

Heat the neutral oil in a large wok or heavy cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add the pork belly pieces first, letting them sizzle for 2 to 3 minutes until the fat renders out and the edges turn crispy and golden.

- 2. Sear the shoulder strips.**

Toss in the pork shoulder, letting the meat sit undisturbed for a minute to develop a hard crust before stir-frying until browned on all sides.

- 3. Build the aromatic base in the rendered fat.**

Push the meat to the edges of the pan and add the chopped onion, minced garlic, and ginger matchsticks to the pooling pork fat in the center. Sauté for about 3 minutes until the onions soften, then stir the meat back into the center along with the sambal oelek.

**1. Deglaze and rapidly reduce the sauce.**

Pour in the kecap manis, the remaining 2 tablespoons of soy sauce, freshly grated nutmeg, and water. Bring it to a rapid bubble, then drop the heat slightly to medium and let it boil for 8 to 10 minutes until the sugars caramelize into a dark, sticky glaze that comfortably coats the back of a spoon.

**2. Finish with acid off the heat.**

Turn off the heat entirely and stir in the fresh lime juice to instantly cut the heavy sweetness and fat, serving immediately over steaming hot jasmine rice.

**CHEF'S NOTES**

● **Do not substitute the sweet soy sauce.**

Kecap manis is the irreplaceable soul of this dish; standard soy sauce sweetened with sugar will not replicate its deep, molasses-like viscosity. You can find it easily at any Asian grocer.

● **Keep the white pepper.**

White pepper provides the distinctly colonial Indonesian spice profile that black pepper simply cannot match.

● **Thicken in a pinch.**

If you are rushing and the sauce isn't thickening fast enough, stir in a slurry of 1 teaspoon cornstarch and 1 tablespoon cold water during the last minute of boiling.



# Klappertaart Stovetop

*klah-per-tart ding-in*

Growing up in an American suburb, the smell of butter, vanilla, and cinnamon simmering on the stove meant one thing: Klappertaart. A relic of Indonesia's Dutch colonial history, this dessert is a brilliant collision of European custard technique and lush tropical coconut. While traditional holiday versions demand an oven and a towering meringue, this stovetop method is the everyday, busy-weeknight secret of Indonesian grandmothers. The absolute trick to making it taste exactly like it does back in Manado? You cook the custard base with fresh coconut water, not just dairy. It's a complete game-changer. Serve it cold, straight from the fridge.

## INGREDIENTS

<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	whole milk	<b>4 tbsp</b>	unsalted butter <i>cubed</i>
<b>1 1/2 cup</b>	young coconut water	<b>1 tsp</b>	pure vanilla extract
<b>1/3 cup</b>	granulated sugar	<b>1 lb</b>	frozen young coconut meat <i>thawed and drained</i>
<b>1/3 cup</b>	all-purpose flour	<b>1/3 cup</b>	raisins <i>briefly soaked in warm water to plump, then drained</i>
<b>1/3 cup</b>	cornstarch	<b>1/3 cup</b>	sliced almonds <i>lightly toasted</i>
<b>1/4 tsp</b>	kosher salt	<b>1 tsp</b>	ground cinnamon
<b>3 large</b>	egg yolks		
<b>1/3 cup</b>	sweetened condensed milk		

## PREPARATION

- **Thaw and drain the coconut meat.**

Ensure the frozen young coconut meat is fully thawed and drained of any excess liquid so it doesn't water down the final custard.

- **Plump the raisins.**

Soaking the raisins in a little warm water for ten minutes revives them, making them juicy rather than chewy when embedded in the soft custard.

## INSTRUCTIONS

- 1. Create the cold slurry.**

In a medium, heavy-bottomed saucepan off the heat, whisk together the all-purpose flour, cornstarch, granulated sugar, and salt. Gradually pour in the whole milk and the coconut water, whisking constantly to ensure there are absolutely no lumps.

- 2. Prep the egg enrichments.**

In a separate small bowl, whisk the egg yolks and the sweetened condensed milk together until entirely smooth. Set this aside.

**1. Cook the custard base.**

Place the saucepan over medium-low heat and cook the mixture, stirring constantly in one direction with a silicone spatula or whisk. Do not walk away from the stove, or the starches will settle and burn on the bottom.

**2. Temper the eggs.**

Just as the milk mixture begins to steam and thicken slightly, take two tablespoons of the hot liquid and whisk it quickly into your egg yolk bowl so the eggs don't scramble. Immediately pour this warmed egg mixture back into the main saucepan, whisking vigorously.

**3. Wait for the bubbles to pop.**

Continue cooking and stirring. The custard will suddenly become incredibly thick and glossy. Wait until you see large bubbles actively pop at the surface (an action called meletup-letup, which signals the raw flour is fully cooked), then immediately remove the pan from the heat.

**4. Emulsify the riches.**

While the custard is still piping hot, add the cubed butter and vanilla extract, stirring until the butter is completely melted and incorporated.

**5. Fold in the texture.**

Gently fold in the drained young coconut meat, half of the plumped raisins, and half of the toasted almonds.

**6. Garnish and chill.**

Divide the hot mixture evenly among individual ramekins or a 9x9 glass dish. While the surface is still warm, dust generously with ground cinnamon and sprinkle the remaining raisins and almonds on top. Cool to room temperature, then cover with plastic wrap pressed directly onto the surface to prevent a skin from forming, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours before serving.

## CHEF'S NOTES

- **Sourcing the coconut.**

Do not use mature, hard coconut or standard shredded baking coconut. You need young coconut meat (kelapa muda). Look for frozen packets in the freezer aisle of an Asian grocer. If you can only find cans of young coconut in syrup, rinse them thoroughly so they don't corrupt the sweetness of the custard.

- **The great nut swap.**

Traditional Manado recipes demand kacang kenari, a soft, oily nut native to eastern Indonesia. Sliced toasted almonds are the universally accepted, practically indistinguishable substitute for the American supermarket shopper.