

Suburban Sambal

Authentic Indonesian Flavors for the Modern Home Kitchen

The Robot Book Club

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Table of Contents

The Blueprint of Bumbu: Foundational Spice Pastes

Sarapan Pagi: The Morning Fuel

Jajanan SD: After-School Nostalgia

Makan Tengah: The Weeknight Communal Table

Masuk Angin: Mother's Magic Potions

Kumpul Keluarga: Weekend Gatherings and Holidays

The Indo-Dutch Heritage: Diaspora Comfort Food

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 specific kind of hunger that gnaws at you when you're far from home. Not for sustenance, but for memory. For the undeniable, visceral punch of a place you carry in your bones, even when your postcode reads "suburban America." This isn't a grand tour of a sprawling archipelago, nor a sanitized guide for the gastronomically timid. This is for the sons and daughters, the grandsons and granddaughters, who know the scent of bruised lemongrass and toasted shrimp paste not as exotic, but as utterly, fundamentally, *themselves*.

This is a cookbook for those who understand that "Indonesian food" isn't just one thing, but a chorus of regional dialects sung around a communal table. It's for the busy weeknight cooks who crave the authentic heart of their grandmother's kitchen, even without the ancestral *cobek* or the tropical ingredients that once seemed a continent away. We've found the shortcuts, yes – the food processor over the mortar, the accessible market finds over the obscure specialty imports – but never at the expense of soul. The *bumbu*, the very foundational spice pastes, remain fiercely authentic.

Forget the polite Western structure of appetizers and entrees. That's not how we eat. Here, you'll find the weighty, savory mornings of *Sarapan Pagi*, the chaotic joy of *Jajanan SD* after school, and the unwavering comfort of *Makan Tengah*, where rice anchors a universe of

dishes. These aren't just meals; they're rituals, remedies for *masuk angin*, celebrations for *kumpul keluarga*. They are the language of love spoken by a generation, now translated for the next.

This is the real stuff. The food that tells a story, not just of what was cooked, but who cooked it, and why it mattered. It's about bringing that vibrant, unapologetic taste of home—the sweet, the spicy, the endlessly complex—to your table, your kitchen, your suburban life. Prepare to cook, and to remember.



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.





Weeknight White Chicken Curry

oh-pore ah-yahm

IN A JAVANESE HOUSEHOLD, THE PERFUME OF SWEET coconut, toasted coriander, and bruised lemongrass signals the arrival of Lebaran. It's a celebratory, labor-intensive slow braise. But you don't need a holiday—or a sprawling afternoon—to conjure that exact, deeply nostalgic flavor on a random Tuesday. By swapping out tough village birds for standard chicken thighs, and trading hard-to-find candlenuts for macadamias to emulsify the velvety broth, you can pull off a profoundly savory, uncompromised white curry in under thirty minutes. No shortcuts. Just smart, honest home cooking.

INGREDIENTS

10 med	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	4 med	makrut lime leaves <i>stems removed and slightly torn</i>
5 med	garlic cloves <i>peeled</i>	1 small	fresh galangal <i>sliced into thin coins and bruised</i>
5 med	raw macadamia nuts	2 med	Indonesian bay leaves
1 tbsp	whole coriander seeds <i>lightly toasted</i>	2 lb	bone-in skin-on chicken thighs
1 tsp	white peppercorns	1 cup	chicken broth
1/2 tsp	cumin seeds <i>lightly toasted</i>	13.5 oz	full-fat unsweetened coconut milk <i>well shaken</i>
1 small	fresh ginger <i>peeled and sliced</i>	1 tsp	kosher salt
3 tbsp	neutral cooking oil	1 tsp	sugar
2 med	lemongrass stalks <i>tough outer layers removed and aggressively bruised</i>	1/2 tsp	chicken bouillon powder
		1/4 cup	fried shallots

PREPARATION

- **Batch the bumbu ahead of time.**

If you prepared a large batch of the foundational Bumbu Putih over the weekend, you can skip the blending step entirely and simply start the recipe by frying half a cup of the pre-made paste.

INSTRUCTIONS

1

Blend the foundation of the bumbu.

In a food processor, combine the shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, coriander, white pepper, cumin, ginger, and oil, blending until it forms a very fine, smooth paste.

1 Sauté the spice paste until deeply fragrant.

Pour the paste into a heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat, tossing in the lemongrass, lime leaves, galangal, and Indonesian bay leaves. Cook for 5 to 8 minutes, stirring constantly, until the moisture evaporates and the oil slightly separates—do not rush this, as cooking out the raw allium flavor is the absolute crux of the dish.

2 Sear the chicken in the spices.

Add the chicken thighs to the pot and stir until the meat turns opaque and is thoroughly coated in the paste, about 3 to 5 minutes.

3 Simmer the braise.

Pour in the chicken broth, bring to a gentle boil, then cover and reduce the heat to low, simmering for 15 minutes to let the chicken absorb the foundational spices.

4 Incorporate the coconut milk with care.

Uncover the pot, add the coconut milk, salt, sugar, and bouillon powder, and maintain a gentle simmer for 5 to 10 minutes while stirring frequently. Never let the pot boil aggressively, or the coconut milk will split and ruin the curry's silky texture.

5 Garnish and serve immediately.

Turn off the heat, remove the woody aromatics so no one breaks a tooth, and serve the tender chicken over hot steamed rice, generously topped with crispy fried shallots.

CHEF'S NOTES

- **Never substitute European bay leaves.**

If you cannot find Indonesian daun salam at an Asian grocer, simply omit it entirely. European bay leaves have an aggressive, piney eucalyptus flavor that will completely destroy the delicate balance of an authentic Indonesian curry.



Wrinkled Fried Eggs in Fiery Red Paste

tuh-LOOR bah-LAH-doh

TELUR BALADO IS THE ULTIMATE SYMBOL OF MATERNAL ingenuity—taking humble hard-boiled eggs and elevating them into a masterpiece of texture and spice. Originating from the Minangkabau people of West Sumatra, true balado isn't just a chili sauce; it is a technique. First, you blister the eggs in hot oil until they wrinkle into golden sponges designed to grab onto every drop of flavor. Then, you fry the coarse chili paste until the oil separates—a non-negotiable step that mellows the raw heat into a deeply savory, caramelized jam.

INGREDIENTS

6 large	eggs	1 large	Roma tomato <i>roughly chopped</i>
1/4 cup	neutral cooking oil	3 med	Makrut lime leaves <i>central ribs removed and torn</i>
4 large	red Fresno chilies <i>stems removed and roughly chopped</i>	1 tsp	kosher salt
3 med	red Thai bird's eye chilies <i>stems removed</i>	1/2 tsp	sugar
3 large	Western shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	1/2 tsp	chicken or mushroom bouillon powder
2 med clove	garlic <i>peeled</i>	1 tsp	fresh lime juice

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Boil and completely dry the eggs.

Cook the eggs to hard-boiled, shock them in an ice bath, and peel. Crucially, pat them completely dry with a paper towel to prevent violent splattering when they hit the hot oil.

2 Fry the eggs to create a blistered crust.

Heat the oil in a wok or large skillet over medium-high heat until shimmering. Carefully slide in the eggs and fry for 1 to 2 minutes, rolling occasionally, until the whites bubble, wrinkle, and form a golden-brown crust. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside, leaving the remaining oil in the pan.

3 Pulse the bumbu into a coarse paste.

In a food processor, pulse the Fresno chilies, Thai chilies, shallots, garlic, and tomato 5 to 6 times. Stop before it becomes a smooth puree—you want a rustic, coarse texture.

1 Fry the paste until the oil separates.

Reheat the remaining oil over medium heat. Add the coarse chili paste and torn lime leaves. Cook for 5 to 8 minutes, stirring frequently, until the water completely evaporates and the red oil bubbles up around the edges—a transformative stage known as pecah minyak.

2 Season and coat the wrinkled eggs.

Stir in the salt, sugar, and bouillon powder. Reduce the heat to low, return the eggs to the skillet, and toss gently until they are thoroughly spackled with the thick, fiery paste.

3 Finish with a hit of acid.

Turn off the heat, squeeze the fresh lime juice over the pan, and give it one final toss. Serve immediately with a mountain of warm, steamed jasmine rice.

CHEF'S NOTES

• **Substituting Makrut lime leaves.**

If you absolutely cannot find frozen or fresh Makrut lime leaves at your local Asian grocer, substitute the zest of half a lime to replicate those crucial floral notes.



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-yahm ah-bahng ah-bahng

IF YOU GREW UP IN AN INDONESIAN HOUSEHOLD, THE rhythmic clink of a ceramic spoon against a bowl meant the morning cart had arrived. This isn't invalid food; it's a robust, maximalist masterpiece built on Kuah Kuning—a vibrant, aromatic golden broth poured over thick, velvety rice. Traditionally, this takes hours of stirring over a hot stove, but a rice cooker does the heavy lifting while you build the broth. Skip the astringent Western bay leaves—they'll

RUIN THE PROFILE—AND HUNT DOWN INDONESIAN DAUN salam in the freezer aisle, swapping hard-to-find candlenuts with raw macadamia nuts for that perfect, authentic richness.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	Jasmine rice <i>rinsed well</i>	1 tsp	sugar
6 cup	chicken stock	6 med	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>
4 med	Indonesian bay leaves <i>divided</i>	4 clove	garlic <i>peeled</i>
2 med	lemongrass <i>bruised, knotted, and divided</i>	4 med	raw macadamia nuts
2 tsp	kosher salt <i>divided</i>	1 med	fresh turmeric <i>peeled</i>
2 med	fresh ginger <i>one piece thickly sliced, one piece peeled</i>	1 tsp	ground coriander
1 1/2 lb	bone-in skin-on chicken thighs	1 med	Chinese crullers <i>sliced</i>
1 tbsp	canola oil	1 cup	tapioca crackers
4 cup	water	1/2 cup	roasted unsalted peanuts
3 med	kaffir lime leaves <i>stems removed</i>	2 stalk	celery <i>finely chopped with leaves</i>
1 med	fresh galangal <i>cut into 1-inch pieces and bruised</i>	2 med	scallions <i>finely chopped</i>
1/2 tsp	white pepper	1/4 cup	crispy fried shallots
		1/4 cup	sweet soy sauce
		2 tbsp	sambal oelek

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Start the congee.

Place the rinsed rice, chicken stock, two bay leaves, one lemongrass stalk, the sliced ginger, and one teaspoon of salt into a rice cooker set to the porridge cycle and let the machine do the work.

2 Blend the spice paste.

In a food processor, combine the shallots, garlic, macadamia nuts, turmeric, peeled ginger, coriander, and a splash of water, blending until entirely smooth.

3 Sauté the aromatics.

Heat the canola oil in a heavy-bottomed pot over medium heat, add the spice paste, and stir constantly until the raw scent dissipates and the oils separate, about 5 to 7 minutes, before tossing in the remaining lemongrass, lime leaves, bay leaves, and galangal.

4 Poach the chicken.

Nestle the chicken thighs into the fragrant paste, pour in the water, add the remaining salt, white pepper, and sugar, then simmer gently for 30 minutes until the chicken is tender.

5 Shred the chicken and strain the broth.

Remove the chicken from the pot, pan-fry briefly in a separate skillet just to crisp the skin, then discard the bones and shred the meat while pouring the golden broth through a fine-mesh sieve to keep it smooth and warm.

1 Whip the congee.

Once the rice cooker finishes, discard the whole aromatics and vigorously whip the hot porridge with a balloon whisk for two minutes to break the grains and create a luxurious, thick texture.

2 Assemble the bowls.

Ladle the thick congee into wide bowls, drown it generously in the warm golden broth, and pile high with shredded chicken, crullers, celery, scallions, peanuts, and a heavy drizzle of sweet soy sauce.

CHEF'S NOTES

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

Western bay leaves are highly astringent and will make this taste like a European soup; hunt down Indonesian daun salam in the freezer section of an Asian grocer or omit them entirely.

- **The macadamia nut swap is crucial.**

Raw macadamia nuts share the exact high-fat lipid profile as traditional, mildly toxic candlenuts, providing the essential creamy mouthfeel to the golden broth.



Nasi Uduk Betawi

nah-see oo-dook beh-tah-wee

IN JAKARTA, THE WORKING DAY BEGINS WITH THE SCENT OF lemongrass and coconut wafting from street-side carts. This is Nasi Uduk—a canonical breakfast engineered to fuel a sweltering morning. First-generation kids might recall grandmothers employing a laborious two-step steaming method, or diaron, to ensure the grains remained flawlessly separate. We aren't doing that. For a busy American weeknight, that exact, unmistakable warung flavor can be captured in a standard rice cooker. The secret is spending exactly five minutes blooming bruised aromatics in coconut milk on the stove before it ever touches the rice. It forces the essential oils into the fat, delivering homeland authenticity without the homeland labor.

INGREDIENTS

2 cup	Jasmine rice <i>rinsed until the water runs clear and drained well</i>	3 med leaves	dried Indonesian bay leaves
1 cup	full-fat canned coconut milk <i>shaken well</i>	3 med slices	fresh galangal
1 1/2 cup	water or low-sodium chicken broth	2 med slices	fresh ginger
1 1/2 tsp	kosher salt	1/2 tsp	ground coriander
2 med stalks	fresh lemongrass <i>dry tops removed, tough outer layer peeled</i>	1/4 cup	crispy fried shallots
2 med leaves	fresh or frozen pandan leaves <i>washed and tied into a tight knot</i>	1 med	rolled omelette <i>thinly sliced</i>
		1 med	cucumber <i>sliced</i>

PREPARATION

- **Bruise the woody aromatics.**

Bash the lemongrass root and the galangal slices heavily with the back of a knife or a heavy skillet to rupture the cell walls before simmering. This ensures their essential oils readily infuse the coconut milk.

- **Rinse the rice completely clear.**

Washing the rice is non-negotiable. Rinse the Jasmine rice in a fine-mesh strainer under cold water until it runs perfectly clear to remove excess surface starch that causes gumminess.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Bloom the aromatics on the stove.

In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine the coconut milk, water, salt, bruised lemongrass, pandan, daun salam, galangal, ginger, and coriander. Bring to a gentle simmer for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally, to extract the fat-soluble flavor compounds from the woody herbs.

2 Combine the rice and liquid.

Transfer the rinsed and drained rice to the inner pot of a rice cooker. Carefully pour the hot, infused coconut milk mixture—including all the leaves and roots—over the rice and give it one gentle stir to level the grains.

3 Cook the rice.

Close the lid and press the standard white rice setting.

4 Let the rice rest undisturbed.

When the rice cooker clicks to warm, do not open the lid. Let it sit for 10 to 15 minutes to allow the steam to redistribute and finish cooking the starches evenly, preventing a mushy bottom layer.

5 Fluff and garnish.

Open the lid, discard the woody herbs and leaves, and gently fluff the rice to fold the creamy top layer of coconut fat back into the distinct, glistening grains. Scoop onto plates and shower generously with crispy fried shallots, sliced omelette, and cucumber.

CHEF'S NOTES

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

Daun salam has a unique earthy, savory aroma crucial to Betawi cooking. European bay leaves have menthol notes that will ruin the dish. If you cannot find daun salam at an Asian grocer, omit it entirely.

- **The Kebon Kacang upgrade.**

For a historically layered variation popular in Central Jakarta, simmer a small cinnamon stick and three whole cloves with the aromatics. It reflects the region's historic Arab spice trade influence.

- **Galangal substitution.**

If fresh or frozen galangal is completely unavailable, substitute with three extra slices of ginger and a pinch of black pepper to mimic the heat, though the piney aroma will be lost.



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 (Half-Cooked Pinch Cakes)

koo-eh choo-bit

WHEN THE SCHOOL BELL RINGS IN JAKARTA, KIDS RUN straight for the street vendors parked outside the gates to buy Kue Cubit, or pinch cakes. The ultimate insider secret to these tiny, localized descendants of Dutch poffertjes is ordering them setengah matang—half-cooked. The bottom gets crispy from the hot iron, while the center remains a warm, molten custard topped with real chocolate sprinkles that melt right into the gooey batter. We are skipping the

IMPOSSIBLE-TO-FIND INDONESIAN MOLDS AND HIJACKING A Japanese Takoyaki pan to reproduce that pure, unadulterated street food magic on a weeknight. No mixer, no fuss, just the real deal.

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 cup	all-purpose flour	1/2 cup	whole milk <i>room temperature</i>
1/2 cup	granulated sugar	4 tbsp	unsalted butter <i>melted and slightly cooled</i>
1/2 tsp	baking powder	1 tsp	vanilla extract
1/4 tsp	baking soda	1/4 cup	Dutch-processed chocolate sprinkles
1/4 tsp	fine sea salt		
2 large	large eggs <i>room temperature</i>		

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Whisk the eggs and sugar by hand until pale and slightly frothy.**
Do not use a stand mixer; over-aerating the eggs will ruin the dense street-food texture we want. Just beat vigorously with a balloon whisk for about two minutes.
- 2 Whisk in the milk and vanilla extract.**
- 3 Sift the dry ingredients directly into the wet mixture and stir to combine.**
Add the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Whisk gently until just incorporated, then fold in the melted butter until the batter is smooth and glossy.

- 1 Cover the bowl and let the batter rest at room temperature for at least 15 minutes.**

This resting period is non-negotiable. It relaxes the gluten and activates the leaveners, ensuring the cakes puff up beautifully instead of turning dense and rubbery.

- 2 Heat a Takoyaki pan over medium-low heat and brush generously with butter or oil.**

Heat control is everything here. If the pan is too hot, the bottoms will burn before the gooey center can form.

- 3 Fill each greased cavity about half to three-quarters full with batter.**

Transferring the batter to a measuring cup with a spout makes pouring much easier. Do not overfill, as the batter will rise.

- 4 Immediately cover the pan with a lid and cook for one to two minutes.**

If your Takoyaki pan lacks a lid, borrow a large glass pot lid that fits over the mold to trap the steam.

- 5 Uncover the pan when bubbles appear, scatter the chocolate sprinkles over the top, and cover again for 30 to 60 seconds.**

You want to pull them off the heat while the edges are golden brown and set, but the center is still shiny, wet, and slightly jiggling—this is the magic of *setengah matang*.

- 6 Pinch the cakes out of the mold using two wooden skewers or small spoons and serve immediately.**

Serve them piping hot so the chocolate continues to melt into the molten batter.

CHEF'S NOTES

- **The Pan Hack**

Authentic Kue Cubit uses a specialized cast-iron pan. A Japanese Takoyaki pan is the perfect substitute because the holes are the correct width (about 4 cm). Just don't fill them to the top, as Takoyaki pans are deeper. An Æbleskiver pan works too, but you will only fill those cavities a third of the way.

- **Real Chocolate Sprinkles Only**

Avoid the hard, crunchy nonpareil sprinkles at all costs. You need real cocoa butter to ensure the sprinkles melt into the hot cake. Look for Dutch Hagelslag or high-quality soft jimmies in the baking aisle.

- **Butter vs. Margarine**

Indonesian street food vendors swear by margarine, specifically the intensely savory Blue Band brand. We use butter and a pinch of salt here for accessibility, but if you have access to an Asian grocer, importing Blue Band will dial the authenticity up to eleven.



Telur Gulung (Abang- Abang Style Rolled Egg Skewers)

tuh-loor goo-loong

IF YOU'VE EVER STOOD OUTSIDE AN INDONESIAN ELEMENTARY school gate, you know the hypnotic rhythm of the street vendor wildly swirling a bamboo stick into bubbling oil to pull out a perfectly cylindrical, lacy egg skewer. The secret isn't magic; it's simply water, starch, and altitude. By heavily thinning the eggs and pouring the

BATTER FROM HIGH ABOVE SMOKING-HOT OIL, THE EGG explodes into a chaotic web that instantly wraps around the stick. Forget your polite French omelets—here, we want chaos in the pan.

INGREDIENTS

3 large	eggs <i>room temperature</i>	1 pinch	ground white pepper
1/2 cup	water	2 cup	neutral cooking oil
1 tbsp	tapioca starch	8 med	bamboo skewers
1/2 tsp	chicken bouillon powder	3 tbsp	Indonesian saus sambal
1/4 tsp	fine sea salt	1 tbsp	tomato ketchup
		1/2 cup	hot water

PREPARATION

- **Whisk the eggs and seasonings.**
In a medium bowl, vigorously whisk the eggs, bouillon powder, salt, and white pepper until completely homogenous and slightly frothy.
- **Dissolve the starch to prevent clumping.**
In a separate small glass, stir the tapioca starch into the half cup of water until completely dissolved, then pour this into the eggs and whisk until fully integrated.
- **Transfer the shockingly thin batter for pouring.**
Pour the batter into a liquid measuring cup with a spout or a clean condiment squeeze bottle to control your pour over the stove.

- **Mix the authentic street-style sauce.**

In a small bowl, whisk together the hot water, saus sambal, and ketchup to create the watery, sweet-and-spicy glaze characteristic of the vendor carts.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Heat the oil in a concave vessel.

Place a carbon steel wok or a deep, curved skillet over medium-high heat and add the oil, ensuring it pools at least two inches deep.

2 Wait for the oil to become aggressively hot.

Test the heat by dropping in a single drop of batter; it should sizzle violently and float to the top instantly.

3 Execute the high pour to create the egg web.

Holding a bamboo skewer in your dominant hand, hold your pouring vessel six to eight inches above the hot oil and pour about three tablespoons of batter in a quick, circular motion so it explodes into a lacy web.

4 Roll the egg web around the skewer immediately.

Wait exactly three seconds for the bottom to set slightly, then plunge your skewer into the edge of the web and use a twisting motion with your fingers to gather the egg tightly around the stick.

5 Press, drain, and serve.

Press the egg cylinder firmly against the inner wall of the wok to squeeze out excess frying oil, then transfer to a wire rack and serve immediately drowned in the watery chili sauce.

CHEF'S NOTES

- **Embrace the failure.**

Your first skewer will likely be an ugly, delicious mess. The technique takes a moment to click in your hands, but by the fourth skewer, you will feel like an absolute master of the wok.

- **Use the right pan.**

A standard flat-bottomed Western skillet will make gathering the egg nearly impossible; the oil must pool deeply in a concave space to force the web together.



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

ah-yahm go-reng men-tay-gah

THIS ISN'T THE BUTTER CHICKEN YOU ORDER AT YOUR LOCAL Indian joint. This is a masterpiece of the Chinese-Indonesian diaspora, born in the bustling vintage Chinese restaurants of 1970s Jakarta. It's a brilliant collision of ancient wok mastery and leftover Dutch colonial pantry staples. The secret to that intoxicating, nostalgic aroma that hits you when the plate drops on the table is a generous knob of butter and a heavy pour of Worcestershire sauce caramelizing together in a blistering pan. By trading traditional bone-in chopped chicken for boneless thighs, you turn grandma's weekend restaurant treat into a 30-minute weeknight hero without losing an ounce of soul.

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 lb	boneless skinless chicken thighs <i>cut into 1.5-inch chunks</i>	3 small clove	garlic <i>smashed and roughly chopped</i>
1 tbsp	fresh lime juice	4 tbsp	Worcestershire sauce
2 small clove	garlic <i>finely minced or grated</i>	3 tbsp	sweet soy sauce
1 tbsp	light soy sauce	1 tbsp	oyster sauce
1/2 tsp	ground white pepper	1 tbsp	ketchup
3 tbsp	cornstarch	1 tsp	sugar
2 tbsp	neutral cooking oil	1/4 cup	water
4 tbsp	salted butter	2 med	scallions <i>green parts only, cut diagonally into 1-inch pieces</i>
1/2 large	yellow onion <i>sliced into thick crescents</i>	1 med	lime <i>cut into wedges for serving</i>

PREPARATION

- **Neutralize the raw poultry smell with an acidic marinade.**

In Indonesian kitchens, neutralizing raw poultry funk is treated as religion. Massage the chicken chunks with the fresh lime juice, grated garlic, light soy sauce, and white pepper until the liquid is entirely absorbed into the meat.

- **Create a protective velvet crust using cornstarch.**

Sprinkle the cornstarch over the wet chicken and toss until thoroughly coated in a sticky paste. Do not add water; the natural moisture of the chicken will hydrate the starch. Let it sit at room temperature for 15 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Rapidly pan-fry the chicken until golden but not fully cooked.

Heat the neutral oil in a large wok or heavy-bottomed skillet over medium-high until shimmering. Fry the chicken in a single layer until a golden crust forms on the bottom, about 3 minutes, then flip and fry for another 2 minutes.

2 Remove the chicken to rest, leaving the rendered fat in the pan.

When the chicken is about 90 percent cooked through, pull it out with a slotted spoon and rest it on a paper towel-lined plate. Keep all that glorious rendered chicken fat right where it is.

3 Sweat the aromatics in a generous, foaming knob of butter.

Drop the heat to medium. Toss the butter into the hot chicken fat, and once it foams and smells nutty, add the sliced yellow onion and chopped garlic. Sauté for exactly two minutes until they soften but retain a vital crunch.

4 Build the sauce by caramelizing the sweet soy and Worcestershire directly in the pan.

Dump the Worcestershire, sweet soy sauce, oyster sauce, ketchup, and sugar straight into the buttery onions. Stir vigorously as the sweet soy hits the hot pan and caramelizes into a dark, bubbling mahogany glaze.

5 Pour in the water to stabilize the emulsion.

Immediately add the water to thin the sauce slightly and prevent the sugars from burning. Let the whole mixture bubble and reduce for 60 seconds.

1 Toss the chicken in the bubbling glaze until the sauce clings to the meat.

Throw the chicken and its resting juices back into the wok. Toss continuously for a minute or two. The cornstarch crust will act like a sponge, absorbing the butter and soy while thickening the remaining liquid into a sticky lacquer.

2 Finish with fresh scallions and a heavy squeeze of lime.

Kill the flame. Toss in the scallions to wilt in the residual heat, squeeze the juice of half a lime over the entire pan, and serve screaming hot with an irresponsible amount of white rice.

CHEF'S NOTES

- **Do not crowd the pan.**

If you dump all the chicken into a small skillet at once, it will steam into sad, grey rubber that repels sauce. Fry in batches if you have to.

- **Watch the sugar content.**

Indonesian sweet soy sauce is packed with palm sugar and burns considerably faster than Western table sugar. Drop the heat to medium before adding the sauces, and use that splash of water as a thermal buffer to prevent a scorched mess.

- **Fixing a broken sauce.**

If the butter separates and leaves a greasy oil slick, don't panic. The cornstarch on the chicken will help bind it when reintroduced, but if it remains broken, add a tablespoon of water and boil it hard for ten seconds to force the emulsion back together.



Wok-Fried Water Spinach with Shrimp Paste

IF THERE'S ONE AROMA THAT DEFINES AN INDONESIAN kitchen at dusk, it's the deeply pungent, intoxicating hit of fermented shrimp paste meeting hot oil. For first-generation kids, it was the scent that meant dinner was ready—and maybe the one you hoped your non-Asian friends wouldn't question too closely. Today, that savory funk is pure, unadulterated nostalgia. This is the quintessential comfort vegetable, equally at home in a humble roadside stall as it is in a sprawling Jakarta seafood joint. The secret to nailing it isn't a

RESTAURANT-GRADE WOK; IT'S SNAPPING THE HOLLOW STEMS by hand for a superior crunch, and ensuring the greens are aggressively dry before they hit the blistering heat.

INGREDIENTS

1 lb	water spinach <i>washed, tough bottom stems discarded, hand-snapped into 2-inch pieces, aggressively spun dry</i>	1 1/2 tbsp	oyster sauce
5 med	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	1 tbsp	kecap manis
3 large cloves	garlic <i>roughly chopped</i>	1 tbsp	water
2 med	Fresno or red jalapeño chilies <i>roughly chopped</i>	1/2 tsp	sugar
2 small	Thai bird's eye chilies <i>roughly chopped</i>	1/4 tsp	mushroom bouillon or MSG
1 tsp	Indonesian shrimp paste (terasi) or belacan <i>toasted</i>	3 tbsp	neutral cooking oil
		1/2 small	tomato <i>cut into thin wedges</i>

PREPARATION

- **Toast the shrimp paste.**

If you buy raw block terasi, you must toast it before using it in the spice paste. Wrap a small piece in aluminum foil and press it in a dry skillet over medium heat for about 2 minutes until deeply fragrant.

Alternatively, you can seek out pre-roasted shrimp paste powder.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Whisk the sauces together.

In a small bowl, stir together the oyster sauce, kecap manis, water, sugar, and mushroom bouillon.

2 Pulse the aromatics into a paste.

In a traditional kitchen, you'd grind this with a mortar and pestle to release the oils. For a weeknight, toss the shallots, garlic, Fresno chilies, bird's eye chilies, and toasted shrimp paste into a mini food processor and pulse until it forms a chunky, wet paste.

3 Sauté the spice paste until fragrant.

Turn on your exhaust fan. Heat a large wok or wide skillet over medium-high heat and add the oil. Once shimmering, add the spice paste. Sauté continuously for 1 to 2 minutes until the harsh, raw smell of the shrimp paste transforms into a deep, roasted savory aroma. Toss in the tomato wedges for 30 seconds.

4 Flash-fry the water spinach.

Crank the heat to the absolute maximum. Drop in the aggressively dried water spinach all at once and immediately pour the sauce mixture over the top. Toss rapidly to coat the leaves in the hot oil and spice paste. If the stems are thick, cover with a tight-fitting lid for exactly 30 to 45 seconds to trap the steam and wilt the leaves without losing their color.

1 Serve immediately.

Remove the lid and give it one final toss. The leaves should be a vibrant emerald green and the stems should still have a definitive snap. Immediately transfer everything, juices included, to a serving platter. Don't let it sit in the hot pan or it will turn brown.

CHEF'S NOTES

- **Hand-snap the stems.**

Put away your knife. Snapping the hollow stems by hand follows the natural fibers of the plant, resulting in a better crunch and allowing the savory sauce to seep inside the tubes.

- **Water is the enemy.**

Wash your greens thoroughly, but dry them obsessively using a salad spinner or paper towels. If they go into the pan wet, the wok's temperature drops and the spinach boils into a brown, mushy mess.

- **Do not substitute standard spinach.**

True kangkung has a hollow, crunchy stem that stands up to high heat. Regular American spinach will instantly disintegrate into mush under these cooking conditions.



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

sah-yoor soh-p beh-ning

WHEN AN INDONESIAN KID WAKES UP COMPLAINING OF masuk angin—a creeping, feverish malaise literally translating to "entering wind"—their mother doesn't reach for a can of generic noodle soup. She makes Sayur Sop Bening. This clear, deeply savory vegetable soup is the ultimate domestic magic potion, relying not on exotic foraging, but on a precise, non-negotiable technique: a potent spice paste of shallots, garlic, nasal-clearing white pepper, and nutmeg, heavily sautéed before hitting the broth. It's a pragmatic, weeknight-friendly bowl of maternal care that clears the sinuses and instantly transports you back to the warmth of a childhood kitchen.

INGREDIENTS

6 cup	high-quality chicken broth	1 tbsp	neutral cooking oil
2 med	medium carrots <i>peeled and sliced on a bias into 1/4-inch coins</i>	4 med	shallots <i>peeled and roughly chopped</i>
1 large	Yukon Gold potato <i>peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes</i>	3 med clove	garlic <i>peeled and smashed</i>
1 cup	green beans <i>ends trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces</i>	1/2 tsp	ground white pepper
1 cup	frozen beef meatballs <i>halved</i>	1/4 tsp	ground nutmeg
2 cup	green cabbage <i>core removed and chopped into rough 1-inch squares</i>	1 tsp	kosher salt
2 med	scallions <i>roughly sliced</i>	1/2 tsp	sugar
1/4 cup	inner celery leaves and tender stems <i>roughly chopped</i>	1/4 cup	crispy fried shallots
		2 cup	cooked jasmine rice <i>warmed for serving</i>

INSTRUCTIONS

1

Pound the flavor base into a wet paste.

In a food processor or a mortar and pestle, combine the shallots, garlic, white pepper, nutmeg, salt, and sugar, pulsing or pounding until it forms a relatively smooth paste.

2

Bloom the spices in oil to kill the raw allium bite.

Heat the neutral oil in a soup pot or Dutch oven over medium heat, add the paste, and sauté constantly for 2 to 3 minutes until golden and fragrant with nutmeg and garlic.

1 Build the broth and simmer the hard root vegetables first.

Pour the chicken broth into the pot with the sizzling spices, bring the mixture to a rolling boil, then drop in the carrots and potatoes, lowering the heat to a simmer partially covered for 5 to 7 minutes.

2 Fold in the green beans and meatballs.

Add the trimmed green beans and halved meatballs to the simmering broth, cooking for another 3 to 4 minutes until the beans are bright green and tender-crisp.

3 Add the delicate greens and immediately kill the heat.

Stir in the chopped cabbage, scallions, and celery leaves, then immediately turn off the stove so the residual heat wilts the greens in about sixty seconds without turning them into mush.

4 Garnish aggressively with fried shallots and serve with warm rice.

Taste the broth for that sharp, comforting kick of white pepper, adjust seasoning if necessary, then ladle into bowls, top generously with crispy fried shallots, and serve alongside steamed jasmine rice.

CHEF'S NOTES

● **Respect the white pepper.**

Do not substitute black pepper; the specific medicinal, sinus-clearing heat of white pepper is what sweats out the cold and delivers the authentic homeland flavor.

● **Mind your celery.**

Western celery stalks are thick and watery, which dilutes the delicate broth. Use only the pale, leafy inner hearts of a standard bunch to replicate the pungent, herbaceous punch of Indonesian Chinese celery.



STMJ (Susu Telur Madu Jahe) - The Late-Night Tonic

WHEN YOU FEEL THE CHILL IN YOUR BONES AND A SUDDEN exhaustion, that's Masuk Angin—the wind entering your body. Grandma might have rubbed your back with a coin to chase it out, but the better cure comes in a steaming mug. STMJ is the quintessential late-night street food tonic from the cool mountains of Malang: a rich, frothy emulsion of milk, egg, honey, and charred ginger that goes down like velvet and hits your stomach like a furnace. We use

PASTEURIZED EGGS FOR SAFETY IN AN AMERICAN KITCHEN, but we don't skip the vital street-cart techniques: blistering the ginger over an open flame and furiously tempering the yolk so it doesn't scramble.

INGREDIENTS

1 med	fresh yellow ginger <i>unpeeled</i>	2 small	green cardamom pods <i>gently crushed</i>
2 cup	whole milk	2 large	pasteurized egg yolks <i>whites discarded</i>
1 med	cinnamon stick	4 tbsp	raw honey
3 small	whole cloves	2 tbsp	sweetened condensed milk

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Char the ginger directly over an open flame.

Hold the unpeeled ginger with metal tongs directly over a gas burner or under a broiler until the skin blisters, blackens, and becomes deeply fragrant, about 3 to 5 minutes.

2 Smash the charred ginger to release its oils.

Let it cool just enough to handle, then place it on a board and hit it hard with the flat of a heavy knife or a pestle to expose the fibrous, smoky interior.

1 Simmer the milk with the ginger and whole spices.

In a saucepan, combine the whole milk, smashed ginger, cinnamon stick, cloves, and cardamom. Bring it to a gentle simmer over medium-low heat—do not let it reach a rolling boil or the milk will scald. Drop the heat to the absolute minimum and let it steep for 10 minutes.

2 Whisk the egg yolks, honey, and condensed milk into a paste.

Drop one pasteurized egg yolk into each of your two serving mugs. Add 2 tablespoons of honey and 1 tablespoon of condensed milk to each, then beat furiously with a fork until pale and thick.

3 Temper the egg mixture with a splash of hot milk.

Remove the steeped milk from the stove. Ladle just two tablespoons of the hot liquid into the first mug, immediately whisking the egg mixture as fast as you can to gently raise its temperature without scrambling it.

4 Strain the remaining milk into the mugs and emulsify.

Pour the rest of the hot spiced milk through a fine-mesh strainer directly into the mugs to catch the ginger and aromatics, stirring rapidly as you pour. Drink the golden, frothy tonic immediately while piping hot.

CHEF'S NOTES

● **Use pasteurized eggs in the shell.**

Because the egg is only gently tempered and not fully cooked, standard supermarket eggs carry a slight risk. Pasteurized shell eggs are easy to find and eliminate this worry completely.

- **Never substitute ground spices for whole aromatics.**

Powdered cinnamon or ginger will not dissolve and will leave a gritty, unpleasant sludge at the bottom of your mug. If you don't have whole spices, skip them—just don't skip the charred ginger.



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.





30-Minute Sukiyaki Beef Rendang

TRUE MINANGKABAU RENDANG IS AN UNDISPUTED heavyweight of world cuisine, a glorious, day-long labor of love that transforms tough beef and coconut milk into dark, caramelized perfection. But when you are standing in an American kitchen on a Tuesday night craving that unmistakable homeland depth, you need a smart diaspora shortcut. We swap out the stewing chunks for paper-thin sukiyaki beef and deploy the grandmother of all secrets: kelapa sangrai. This deeply roasted coconut paste instantly injects the

INTENSE, NUTTY COMPLEXITY THAT USUALLY TAKES SIX hours to build, giving you an explosive, authentic holiday flavor in exactly thirty minutes. No compromises, just brilliant cooking.

INGREDIENTS

1 cup	unsweetened desiccated coconut	2 tbsp	neutral cooking oil
6 large	shallots <i>roughly chopped</i>	2 med	lemongrass <i>tough outer layers removed and thick bottom bulb smashed</i>
6 large	garlic <i>peeled</i>	5 med	kaffir lime leaves <i>central stems removed</i>
5 med	Fresno chilies <i>stemmed and seeded</i>	2 med	Indonesian bay leaves
1 inch	fresh ginger <i>peeled</i>	1 med	cinnamon stick
1 inch	fresh galangal <i>peeled</i>	3 med	whole cloves
1 inch	fresh turmeric <i>peeled</i>	2 med	star anise
4 med	macadamia nuts	3 med	cardamom pods <i>lightly crushed</i>
1 tbsp	whole coriander seeds	13 1/2 oz	full-fat coconut milk
1 tsp	whole cumin seeds	1/2 cup	low-sodium beef broth
1/2 tsp	grated nutmeg	1 tsp	kosher salt
3 tbsp	neutral cooking oil	1 tsp	coconut sugar
		1 tbsp	tamarind paste
		1 1/2 lb	thinly sliced sukiyaki beef

PREPARATION

- **Prepare your workstation before applying heat.**

This recipe moves aggressively once the wok is hot, so ensure all aromatics are peeled, chopped, and measured out before you begin toasting the coconut.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Toast the desiccated coconut until espresso brown.

Place the coconut in a dry, wide skillet over medium-low heat and stir constantly until it transitions from white to a very dark brown, taking care not to burn it to ash.

2 Process the toasted coconut into kelapa sangrai.

Immediately transfer the hot coconut to a food processor and blend continuously until it releases its natural oils, transforming into a thick, dark, oily paste.

3 Blend the bumbu halus spice paste.

In a blender, combine the shallots, garlic, chilies, ginger, galangal, turmeric, macadamia nuts, coriander, cumin, nutmeg, and the three tablespoons of neutral oil, pureeing until incredibly smooth.

4 Sauté the spice paste until the oil separates.

Heat the remaining two tablespoons of oil in a large wok over medium heat, add the puree and all the whole aromatics like lemongrass and cinnamon, and fry continuously until the raw aroma mellows and the oil visibly bubbles away from the solids.

5 Build and reduce the coconut sauce.

Pour in the coconut milk, beef broth, salt, coconut sugar, and tamarind paste, bring the mixture to a gentle boil, and simmer vigorously for fifteen minutes until the liquid thickens and darkens into a rich gravy.

1 Inject the flavor engine.

Stir the prepared kelapa sangrai into the bubbling sauce to instantly deliver the thick, roasted, caramelized characteristics of an all-day cook.

2 Flash-cook the sliced beef.

Gently fold the paper-thin sukiyaki beef into the hot sauce and stir constantly for three to five minutes until the meat is perfectly tender and coated in the gravy, then remove from heat and serve immediately with steamed rice.

CHEF'S NOTES

• **Sourcing the right cut of beef.**

Look for pre-packaged sukiyaki or shabu-shabu cuts at your local Asian market, or ask the butcher at your local supermarket to shave a ribeye steak paper-thin.

• **Do not rush the kelapa sangrai.**

The coconut must reach a deep espresso color to provide the dish's signature depth; stopping at golden brown will leave you with a sweet, weak curry rather than a true rendang.



Udang Bakar Jimbaran

IF YOU'VE EVER WALKED THE SAND AT JIMBARAN BAY AT sunset, you know the smell: coconut husk smoke, sweet caramelized seafood, and the intoxicating punch of garlic and chili. This isn't ancient palace cooking; it's the brilliant, bustling street-food culture of late-twentieth-century Bali. The secret to that iconic sticky glaze isn't a mystery—it's a piece of sweet pineapple blended right into the spice paste, bolstered by a pantry raid of modern Indonesian staples like sweet soy and ABC chili sauce. This recipe streamlines the beachfront warung technique for your cast-iron grill pan on a Tuesday night, delivering absolute, unapologetic authenticity.

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 lb	large tiger prawns <i>shell-on</i>	1 1/2	tomato ketchup
1 med	lime <i>juiced</i>	1 med	oyster sauce
3/4 tsp	kosher salt <i>divided</i>	1 tsp	Indonesian chili sauce
1/2 tsp	black pepper	1 tsp	sweet soy sauce
1/2 med	yellow onion <i>roughly chopped</i>	1 tsp	brown sugar
6 med	cloves garlic <i>peeled and divided</i>	3 tbsp	water
1/4 cup	sweet pineapple <i>diced</i>	1 large	red tomato <i>diced</i>
1 tsp	fermented shrimp paste	6 small	bird's eye chilies <i>thinly sliced</i>
3 tbsp	neutral cooking oil <i>divided</i>	3 med	shallots <i>thinly sliced</i>
		1 med	key lime <i>juiced</i>
		1/2 tsp	sugar

PREPARATION

- **Butterfly the prawns to maximize the surface area for the glaze.**
Using kitchen shears, cut down the back of the prawn shell from the head to the tail. Use a paring knife to slice deeply into the flesh without cutting all the way through, butterfly the prawn open, and remove the dark digestive vein.
- **Toast the fermented shrimp paste before using.**
Using tongs, hold the block of terasi over a gas burner flame for a few seconds, or dry-roast it in a skillet, until it becomes highly fragrant. This neutralizes the raw ammonia aromas and unlocks a deeply savory profile.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 Marinate the prawns to neutralize odors and firm the flesh.

Toss the butterflied prawns with the juice of the regular lime, 1/2 teaspoon of the kosher salt, and the black pepper. Let sit for 15 minutes, then pat them completely dry so they grill rather than steam.

2 Blend the aromatics into a smooth puree.

In a small food processor or blender, combine the onion, 5 cloves of the garlic, the pineapple, the toasted shrimp paste, and 1 tablespoon of the cooking oil. Process until smooth.

3 Fry the spice paste to eliminate the raw allium flavor.

Heat the remaining 2 tablespoons of oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the pureed aromatics and sauté continuously for 5 to 7 minutes. Watch for the moisture to evaporate and the oil to begin separating from the paste.

4 Build the sticky caramel glaze.

Reduce the heat to low. Stir in the ketchup, oyster sauce, chili sauce, sweet soy sauce, brown sugar, and water. Simmer for 1 minute until you have a thick, paintable glaze, then remove from the heat.

5 Sear the prawns to set the shells and meat.

Preheat a cast-iron grill pan to medium-high heat and lightly oil the grates. Place the prawns shell-side down for 2 minutes until they turn bright orange, then flip meat-side down for 1 minute.

1 Baste heavily and caramelize the prawn meat.

Flip the prawns shell-side down again. Using a brush, generously paint the meat side of each prawn with the cooked glaze. Grill for another 1 to 2 minutes until the meat is opaque and the sugars bubble, taking care not to let them burn.

2 Mash the fresh tomato sambal for serving.

In a mortar and pestle or a bowl, lightly crush the remaining 1 clove of garlic with the sugar and remaining 1/4 teaspoon of salt. Add the diced tomato, chilies, and shallots, mashing gently to release juices without turning it into a puree. Stir in the key lime juice and serve immediately alongside the prawns.

CHEF'S NOTES

- **The secret of the pineapple.**

Fresh pineapple contains bromelain for slight tenderization, but more importantly, its natural sugars caramelize rapidly on the grill, creating the signature sticky glaze that defines Jimbaran seafood.

- **Sourcing Indonesian sauces.**

ABC brand chili sauce is sweeter and more garlic-forward than standard sriracha, while sweet soy sauce (kecap manis) is thick and syrupy. Both are easily found at Asian grocers and are entirely critical to reproducing this specific beachfront flavor profile.



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.





Corned Beef & Spiced Potato Fritters

per-kuh-del ken-tang kor-net

PERKEDEL IS A MASTERCLASS IN ADAPTATION, A DIRECT descendant of the heavy Dutch frikadel reborn through Indonesian ingenuity. Where European colonists demanded meat, local grandmothers made fluffy, starchy potatoes the star, spiking them with just enough canned corned beef to deliver a massive, savory punch. For kids who grew up in the States, the scent of these frying in the kitchen—heavy with caramelized shallots and warm nutmeg—is the undeniable smell of home. The secret to keeping them from

TURNING TO MUSH IN THE PAN IS SIMPLE AND NON-negotiable: never boil the potatoes. Frying them dry guarantees a lacy, crisp egg-batter crust that yields to a perfect, pillowy center.

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 lb	Russet or Yukon Gold potatoes <i>peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes</i>	1/4 cup	Chinese celery leaves <i>finely chopped</i>
1 cup	neutral oil <i>divided</i>	2 large	scallions <i>finely chopped</i>
4 large	shallots <i>finely sliced</i>	1/2 tsp	ground nutmeg
3 med cloves	garlic <i>finely sliced</i>	1/2 tsp	ground white pepper
1/2 cup	canned corned beef	1 tsp	chicken or beef bouillon powder
		1/2 tsp	kosher salt
		2 large	eggs <i>separated into yolks and whites</i>

PREPARATION

- **Gather and prepare your mis en place.**

This recipe moves fast once the potatoes hit the oil, so ensure your shallots, garlic, and celery leaves are chopped and ready to go.

INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Fry the potatoes until tender.**

Pour enough neutral oil into a large skillet to reach a half-inch depth and heat over medium-high. Once shimmering, fry the potato cubes for 8 to 10 minutes until they are easily pierced with a fork and light golden brown. Transfer them to a large mixing bowl with a slotted spoon.

1 Sauté the shallots and garlic.

Pour off all but two tablespoons of the hot oil from the skillet. Add the sliced shallots and garlic, frying over medium-low heat for 3 to 4 minutes until deeply golden. This crucial step destroys the pungent bite of the raw alliums, leaving behind a deep, sweet foundation.

2 Mash the hot potatoes and aromatics.

Scrape the fried shallots, garlic, and any residual oil into the bowl with the potatoes. While everything is still piping hot, crush the mixture with a potato masher until mostly smooth, leaving a few rustic lumps for texture.

3 Fold in the flavorings and egg yolks.

Add the corned beef, chopped celery leaves, scallions, nutmeg, white pepper, bouillon powder, salt, and the two egg yolks to the potato mash. Mix thoroughly until the dough is deeply savory and highly seasoned.

4 Shape the fritters.

Roll about two tablespoons of the mixture between your palms to form a ball, then flatten it slightly into a thick patty about two inches wide. Repeat until all the dough has been used.

5 Coat in egg white and fry until crispy.

Lightly beat the egg whites in a small bowl until foamy, and heat a quarter-inch of oil in a clean skillet over medium heat. Dip each patty into the egg whites to fully coat, then lay them gently into the hot oil, frying for 2 to 3 minutes per side until a golden, lacy crust forms.

CHEF'S NOTES

- **Respect the nutmeg.**

In the American kitchen, nutmeg is usually relegated to holiday baking, but here it is the non-negotiable Indo-Dutch secret that makes the dish taste exactly like home.

- **Embrace the canned meat.**

Using canned corned beef isn't a cheap shortcut; it is the historically accurate, deeply authentic preparation born from the legacy of pantry staples in modern Indonesia.

- **Divide and conquer the eggs.**

Traditionalists put the rich yolk inside the dough for moisture, reserving the whites to create a pure, lacy, protective shell on the outside.



Quick-Seared Javanese Beefsteak

bis-teek jah-wah ee-ris

IF YOU GREW UP IN AN INDONESIAN-AMERICAN HOUSEHOLD, the smell of Bistik Jawa sizzling in the kitchen probably meant someone was showing you some serious love. It is a beautiful relic of the Dutch colonial era, where local grandmas took a bland European meat-and-potatoes concept and totally reinvented it. They swapped wine reductions for a dark, glossy glaze of sweet soy sauce, hit it with a heavy dose of warming nutmeg, and kept the colonial Worcestershire sauce for tang. By slicing accessible supermarket steaks paper-thin against the grain, the meat absorbs the marinade

INSTANTLY AND COOKS IN UNDER THREE MINUTES. SERVED alongside buttered vegetables and crinkle-cut fries—yes, fries are one hundred percent authentic to the homeland version—this dish delivers a profound hit of nostalgic comfort on a Tuesday night.

INGREDIENTS

1 lb	sirloin, flank steak, or tenderloin <i>thinly sliced against the grain</i>	1/2 large	yellow onion <i>thinly sliced</i>
5 tbsp	Kecap Manis <i>divided</i>	3 large cloves	garlic <i>finely minced</i>
1 tbsp	Worcestershire sauce	1 cup	low-sodium beef broth
1/2 tsp	fresh nutmeg <i>grated</i>	1 tbsp	ketchup
1/2 tsp	ground white pepper	1 tsp	cornstarch <i>whisked with 1 tbsp cold water</i>
1/2 tsp	kosher salt	1 large bag	frozen crinkle-cut fries <i>baked according to package instructions</i>
2 tbsp	unsalted butter <i>divided</i>	2 cup	green beans and carrots <i>steamed and lightly tossed in butter</i>
		2 tbsp	fried shallots

PREPARATION

- **Slice the beef against the grain.**

Slicing economical cuts paper-thin against the grain physically shortens the muscle fibers, guaranteeing a tender chew without hours of braising.

INSTRUCTIONS

1 **Marinate the beef.**

Place the thinly sliced beef in a mixing bowl, add 3 tablespoons of the Kecap Manis, the Worcestershire sauce, grated nutmeg, white pepper, and salt, then massage the marinade into the meat with your hands and let it sit at room temperature for 30 minutes.

2 **Flash-sear the steak.**

Heat a large cast-iron skillet or heavy-bottomed pan over medium-high heat, melt 1 tablespoon of butter, and working in batches, sear the beef slices undisturbed for 60 to 90 seconds until slightly charred, then flip for 30 seconds more before removing to a plate covered loosely with foil.

3 **Build the gravy foundation.**

Reduce the heat to medium-low, melt the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter in the same skillet, and sauté the sliced onions and minced garlic for 2 to 3 minutes until softened, scraping up the browned fond from the bottom of the pan.

4 **Simmer and thicken the sauce.**

Pour in the beef broth, the remaining 2 tablespoons of Kecap Manis, and the ketchup, bring to a gentle simmer, then stir in the cornstarch slurry and whisk constantly for 1 to 2 minutes until the gravy becomes glossy and thick enough to coat the back of a spoon.

1 Bring it all together.

Turn the heat down to low, slide the rested beef and any accumulated juices back into the skillet, toss gently for 30 seconds just to warm the meat through, and remove from heat immediately so the beef remains tender.

2 Plate the heritage.

Arrange the beef and gravy on a plate next to a handful of hot, crispy fries and the steamed vegetables so they can soak up the edges of the sauce, and garnish generously with crispy fried shallots.

CHEF'S NOTES

• **Sourcing Kecap Manis.**

ABC or Bango brand are excellent authentic choices available at any Asian grocer. If totally inaccessible, simmer equal parts standard soy sauce and dark brown sugar until syrupy as a functional substitute.