

# Indonesian Recipes

Food varies so much throughout Indonesia, depending on religion and culture, and what ingredients are easy to obtain. This collection of recipes come from the island of Sumatra, where most of the Indonesian Lutherans live.

Sumatran food is traditionally very spicy with lots of chilli, lemon grass, ginger, garlic and coriander. The majority of Sumatrans are Muslim so there is very little pork available in most areas, although in the larger cities like Medan it is available in Chinese restaurants. The Batak people around Lake Toba are mostly Christians so you can get some excellent pork dishes there.

## RIJSTTAFEL

Most people eat out at restaurants regularly in Indonesia, as food is relatively cheap. The common way to eat is to have a rijsttafel. The Indonesian rijsttafel, a Dutch word that literally translates to "rice table", is an elaborate meal adapted by the Dutch from the Indonesian feast called nasi padang. It consists of many (up to forty!) side dishes served in small portions, accompanied by rice prepared in several different ways (see photo below). Popular side dishes include egg rolls, sambals, satay, fish, fruit, vegetables, pickles, and nuts. Rijsttafels strive to feature an array of not only flavors and colors and degrees of spiciness but also textures. Such textures may include crispy, chewy, slippery, soft, hard, velvety, gelatinous, and runny. People choose a small portion of many different meals. The following recipes below would be offered at a rijsttafel, or a family may have them at home with rice.

## NASI GORENG (Indonesian fried rice)

This dish can be enjoyed by itself or as the basis of a larger meal, for example with a rijsttafel. It is very easy to make and won't take more than 20 minutes to prepare.

### Ingredients:

- 350g Long Grain Rice
- 2 Tbs Vegetable Oil
- 3 Eggs
- 1 Onion
- 2 Green Chillis, Sambal Ulek or Sambal Badjak.
- 1 Garlic Clove
- 1 Leek
- 1 teaspoon Ground Coriander
- 1 teaspoon Ground Cumin
- 250g Chicken meat
- 250g Shelled Prawns
- 3 Tbs Kecap Manis

### Preparation:

This dish is best made from cold leftover rice, but you can cook a fresh batch and leave it to cool for at least 4 hours.

Beat the eggs and make into an omelette, slice into strips and set aside.

Heat the oil in a wok or large frying pan. Add the chopped onion, leek, garlic and chillies. Fry until the onion is soft. Add the coriander and cumin. Slice chicken into strips and add with the prawns to the onion mixture and cook, stirring occasionally until they are well mixed. Add the rice, soya sauce and omelette strips and cook for a further 5 minutes. Decorate with some of the leftover leek and serve hot.

## SAJUR LODEH

### (Mixed vegetable dish with coconut)

This is a soupy dish made with 3 or 4 different vegetables. You can use almost any vegetable you have at hand, for example: white cabbage, French green beans, carrots, tauge, bamboo shoots, etc. Very nice as a main or side dish with plain boiled rice.

#### Ingredients:

1 Onion  
2 Cloves of Garlic  
2 teaspoons Sambal Ulek or 1 fresh hot Chilli  
3 tablespoons Peanut oil  
1 teaspoon Laos powder  
800g Mixed Vegetables  
350ml Coconut milk  
350ml Chicken stock  
2 tablespoons Kecap Manis  
Pinch of Pepper and sal  
2 Eggs (Hard boiled)  
250g chicken breast (boiled)

#### Preparation:

Puree the onions, garlic and sambal ulek in a blender. Add Laos powder. Heat oil in a wok and stir fry the paste for 2 min. Stir in the coconut milk and chicken stock. Bring to boil. Add the vegetables in order of cooking time. Simmer until all vegetables are tender but still crunchy. Add Kecap Manis, salt and pepper, finely sliced chicken and quartered eggs and boil for a further minute.

Serve hot.

## SOTO - SUMATRAN SOUP

**Soto** is a traditional Sumatran noodle soup very similar to a Laksa with coconut milk and spices, usually served with Ayam (chicken). Soto in Indonesian means soup so there are many different types.

#### Ingredients:

1kg chicken - thigh or breast  
1 onion  
2 tablespoons ginger  
4 cloves of garlic  
2 small red chillies  
Lemon grass  
Galangal  
1 teaspoon turmeric  
1 teaspoon salt  
2 teaspoons coriander  
2 teaspoons palm sugar  
1/4 teaspoon pepper  
1/2 litre of chicken stock  
1 can of coconut cream  
3 cups of water  
1.5 tablespoons lemon juice

#### Preparation:

Dice the chicken into small bite sized pieces

Heat some vegetable oil in a wok. Add the chicken pieces and cook until it is just turning white. Remove chicken from the wok.

Heat some more oil and add garlic, onion, chillies and ginger and cook until the onion is soft.

Add a stalk of lemon grass, galangal, turmeric, salt, coriander, sugar, pepper.

Add the chicken pieces then cover with the chicken stock, coconut cream water.

Bring to the boil then reduce the heat and simmer the soup with the lid on for 20 minutes or until the chicken is cooked through.

## **BEEF RANDANG**

### **Ingredients:**

1 tsp shrimp paste  
1 kg rump steak  
1 stalk lemon grass  
5 candlenuts, ground  
1 tsp salt  
1 tbsp sugar  
1 tbsp soya sauce  
1/2 cup thick coconut milk  
8 tbsps oil  
2 cm piece ginger  
3 stalk lemon grass - sliced thinly  
120g grated coconut  
4 slices galangal  
2 tbsp curry powder  
120g shallots  
4 red chillies  
1 clove garlic

### **Preparation:**

Grind the garlic, ginger, chopped chillies, galangal and curry powder (mix with a few drops of water before adding the powder) in a mortar, add a drop or 2 of the coconut milk to ensure it is a runny paste. Add this paste to the hot oil in a wok, fry for 30 seconds and add the beef and slightly fry until the meat is just starting to turn light brown and then add the thick coconut milk, the lemon grass. Bring to the boil and then turn the heat completely down and simmer with the pan covered for 1.5 - 2 hours. The coconut milk will reduce so keep an eye on it and maybe add a touch more coconut milk during this time. After the 2 hours you can eat this dish as a wet curry or turn the heat up to medium and then reduce the coconut milk completely down and then pan fry the beef.

## **WEST SUMATRAN FISH CURRY**

Ikan (fish) curry is very popular in Sumatra especially in the West Sumatran province.

### **Ingredients:**

1.2 litres coconut milk  
8-12 dried hot red chillies  
2 sticks fresh or 2 tbsp dried sliced lemongrass  
4cm cube fresh or 5-6 slices dried galangal  
15g candlenuts or cashew nuts  
100g red pepper  
100g shallots or onions  
2.5cm cube fresh ginger  
3 cloves garlic  
½ tsp ground turmeric  
1 tsp paprika  
1kg fish steaks about 2.5cm/1in thick  
1½ tsp salt  
2½ tbsp lime or lemon juice  
4 tbsp vegetable oil  
4-5 fresh kaffir lime leaves or 7.5x1cm piece lemon rind  
10 fresh curry leaves or 3 dried bay leaves  
15-20 fresh mint leaves  
8-10 cherry or very small tomatoes

### **Preparation:**

1. Crumble the red chillies into a small bowl. Add the dried lemongrass and dried galangal and the nuts. Add enough water just to cover and leave to soak for 1 hour.
2. If you are using fresh lemongrass, cut about 15cm off each stick, measuring from the bottom and discard the rest. Crush the bulbous bottoms lightly with a hammer and set aside. If you are using fresh galangal, peel and coarsely chop it.
3. Remove the seeds from the red pepper and chop it coarsely. Peel the shallots, ginger and garlic and chop them coarsely.
4. In an electric blender combine the soaked ingredients and their soaking liquid, the fresh galangal (if you

are using it), the red pepper, shallots, ginger, garlic, turmeric and paprika. Blend thoroughly, adding another 1-2 tbsp of water if necessary.

5. Rub the fish steaks with ½ tbsp of the salt and 1 tbsp of the lime juice. Set aside.

6. Spoon the coconut cream off the top of the milk and set aside. Add enough water to the remaining thin coconut milk to make it up to about 1.5 litres.

7. Put the oil in a large, non-stick frying pan and set it over a medium-high heat. When the oil is hot, put in the paste from the blender. Stir and fry until the paste turns dark red and separates from the oil.

8. Put in the thin coconut milk-water combination and add the two whole sticks of fresh lemongrass.

9. Bring to the boil, scraping up any hardened juices stuck to the bottom of the pan. Turn the heat to low and simmer gently for 15 minutes. Remove the lemongrass and set aside.

10. Empty the contents of the pan into a sieve set over a bowl and push the sauce through. Return all but 4 tbsp of the sieved sauce to the frying pan and bring it to a simmer.

11. Put the lemon grass sticks back in along with the lime leaves (or lemon rind), curry leaves, mint, the remaining 1½ tbsp lime juice and the remaining 1 tsp salt. Stir.

12. Now lay the fish steaks in a single layer in the pan and bring its contents to a simmer again over a medium-low heat. Cook gently for about 10 minutes or until the fish is done, spooning the hot sauce over the steaks frequently.

13. Put the thick coconut cream into a bowl and stir it well. Slowly add the 4 tbsp of reserved sauce and mix it in. Pour this over the fish.

14. Halve the tomatoes and add them to the pan. Cook until everything is just heated through, then serve.

## **BABI KETJAP**

### **(Pork in sweet soya sauce)**

#### **Ingredients:**

500g Tender Pork

1 large Onion

2 Garlic cloves

3 cm fresh Ginger

30g dark sugar

½ cup Kecap Manis (sweet Indonesian soya sauce)

2 cups Water

Lemon juice

1 stock cube

pepper & salt

#### **Preparation:**

Finely dice onion, garlic and ginger. Cut pork into strips. Add sugar, pepper and salt. Fry in small saucepan until onion is soft and the pork is dark. Add the Kecap Manis and water, lemon juice and stock cube and leave to simmer on a low flame for about 30 min.

Serve with boiled or fried rice.

## **GULAI MERAH**

### **(Red Short Ribs of Beef)**

#### **Ingredients:**

3 garlic cloves, sliced

1 piece ginger root, sliced

4-5 hot chilli peppers, seeded and sliced

2 teaspoons coriander, ground

½ teaspoon turmeric, ground

1 teaspoon salt

2 cups water

2 pounds beef ribs cut into 4cm pieces

2 tablespoons corn oil

2 salam leaves

2 slices laos

1 stalk lemon grass

1 slice lemon

#### **Preparation:**

Process shallots, garlic, ginger, chillies, coriander, turmeric, salt and 1/2 cup of water to a smooth sauce. Marinate beef for 1/2 hour.

Heat the oil: add the beef and marinade, the salam, laos, lemon grass and lemon; stir-fry over moderate

heat for 5 minutes.

Add remaining water, cover and cook until beef is tender, about 1 hour.

If the sauce evaporates too quickly, add another 1/2 cup water and continue to simmer.

Serve warm.

Serves six with rice and salad.

## **GRILLED FISH WITH GREENS**

### **Ingredients:**

½ piece ginger sliced

1 onion sliced

1-2 red chilli peppers, seeded and sliced

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon sugar

¼ teaspoon turmeric

2 cups coconut milk

1 whole fish (snapper or similar)

1 slice laos

2 stalks lemon grass or 2 slices lemon

½ pound spinach, coarsely chopped

### **Preparation:**

Process the ginger, onion, chilli, salt, sugar, turmeric and 1/4 cup of the coconut milk into a smooth paste.

Set aside. Grill fish over charcoal or in a gas or electric broiler for 2 minutes on each side.

Put the remaining coconut milk and the spice paste in a large skillet and bring to a boil over moderate heat.

Add the laos and lemon grass and simmer for 5 minutes, stirring frequently.

Add the fish and greens, cook for 15 minutes basting occasionally.

Serve warm. Serves 4 with rice and other dishes.

## **ONGOL-ONGOL**

An Indonesian sweet.

### **Ingredients:**

100g Corn starch

200g Goela Djawa ( Palm Sugar )

1/2 a Vanilla stick or Vanilla essence

500ml Water

pinch of Salt

200g grated fresh Coconut

### **Preparation:**

Use some of the cold water to make a thin paste with the corn starch. Add the sugar, vanilla and salt to the water and boil until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and stir in the corn-starch mix. Return to the stove and simmer for a further 3 minutes. Remove the vanilla stick and pour mixture in a tray so that the liquid is about 2cm deep. Leave to cool and cut in to 2cm square cubes. Grate coconut flesh and add a pinch of salt. Roll cubes through the coconut and serve.