

thai-style poached whole salmon

Serves 8-10 as part of a buffet

Both the fish and the sauce can be served hot, warm or cold, so all the work can be done in advance.

- 2 lemongrass stems (white part only), halved, bruised
- 8 kaffir lime leaves*
- 2cm piece ginger, sliced
- 2kg whole salmon or ocean trout, cleaned, scaled (ask your fishmonger to do this)
- 1 bunch coriander
- 300g light palm-sugar*, grated
- 1/2 red onion, sliced
- 2 1/2 tbs tamarind concentrate*
- 2 1/2 tbs fish sauce
- Vegetable oil, to deep-fry
- 6 Asian red eschalots*, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 long red chillies, sliced into rounds
- Lime wedges, to serve

Place 2 lemongrass halves, 2 lime leaves and half the ginger in the cavity of the fish. Place in a fish kettle (from kitchenware shops), cover with cold water and slowly bring to the boil over medium heat. When boiling, turn off the heat, cover tightly and stand for 30 minutes (without removing the lid) until just cooked.

While the fish is cooking, wash the coriander well, pick the leaves and refrigerate until required. Make sure coriander roots are clean, then thinly slice. Combine the palm sugar and 2 tablespoons water in a pan over medium heat, then stir until sugar



dissolves. Add coriander roots, onion, remaining lemongrass and ginger, and 4 lime leaves. Bring to boil, then simmer over low heat for 5 minutes or until lightly caramelised. Add the tamarind and fish sauce, then simmer for a further 5 minutes. Strain into a jug, pressing down on solids before discarding. Set aside.

Half-fill a deep-fryer or heavy-based pan with oil and heat to 190°C (or test a cube of bread – it will turn golden in 30 seconds when oil is ready). Deep-fry the eschalot, garlic and chilli, in separate batches, for 1-2 minutes until crisp and golden. Drain on paper towel.

Carefully remove the fish from the poaching liquid and place on a large serving platter. Pat dry with paper towel. To remove skin, loosen around the gills, then pull back towards the tail. (It's not necessary to remove the skin from the underside of the fish at this stage.) Use paper towel to soak up any moisture around fish. Pour sauce over fish and garnish with fried eschalot, garlic and chilli, coriander leaves and finely shredded remaining 2 lime leaves. Serve with lime wedges.

* Kaffir lime leaves, palm sugar, tamarind concentrate and Asian red eschalots are from Asian food shops.



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