

PENANG STYLE BAKSTIK

“Bakstik” is a common home-cooked dish in Penang, Malaysia. This is one of comfort foods that the Penangites (people from Penang) grow up eating, and a favorite dish for many children. It’s easy enough for you to try make them at home.

Ingredients

- 1lbs minced meat (I am using faux minced meat)
- 4 pips garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 big yellow onions, peeled and sliced into 8’s or 12’s
- 2 potatoes, peeled and sliced into rounds
- 1 small carrot, peeled & sliced into rounds or diced them if you prefer
- 1 cup frozen green peas (defrosted)

For the minced meat marinade:

- 2 tbsp. light soy sauce
- 1/2 tbsp. dark soy sauce
- 1 tsp 5-spice powder
- 1/2 tsp white pepper powder
- ½ tbsp. corn flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 egg, lightly beaten

For the gravy:

- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 star anise
- 2 tbsp. light soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. dark soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 cups water
- 2 tbsp. cornstarch + 2 tbsp. water (slurry)
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/4 tsp white pepper powder
- 1 tsp sugar

Method

- In a large bowl, place all the ingredients for the marinade and mix together. Add the minced pork/meat substitute and stir to mix well. Set aside for at least 1 hour or overnight. After marinating, scoop the marinated minced meat and formed into round patties, about 1 inch diameter. Roll them into balls then flatten them slightly to form like a mini burger (but not too flat)
- Heat enough oil in a wok/pan to pan fry the potato slices. When oil is hot, fry the potatoes until the edges are slightly browned. Remove and drain on paper towels. Using the same oil, fry the meat patties on medium heat until golden brown. Turn off heat. Remove the meat patties and drain on paper towels.
- Remove the some of the oil from the wok/pan. (if the oil is too dark, please feel free to discard this oil and replace with fresh oil)
- Sauté the minced garlic, cinnamon stick, star anise and big onions until fragrant, about 2-3 mins.
- Then add the fried sliced potatoes and carrots. Add in the light soy sauce, dark soy sauce and Worcestershire sauce. Stir fry for 2-3 mins then add water. Bring to the boil.
- Add fried meat patties & peas. Simmer for 5 mins then season with salt, pepper and sugar.
- Finally, add the cornstarch slurry and bring to the boil again to thicken the gravy. Taste and adjust seasoning if required. Stir well then turn off heat. Serve hot with steamed rice

NOTE: Bakstik is usually made with minced pork as the word “bak” means meat in Hokkien (a Chinese dialect spoken in Penang); but it usually refers to pork. You can replace with minced meat (or faux meat) if desired. You can also air fry the sliced potatoes and patties before cooking them with the gravy in a wok/pan.

CHAR LIAP LIAP (STIR FRIED CUBES)

Ingredients

- 2 cup long beans (or French beans), diced
- 1 cup Chinese pickled sweet radish strips (chai por in Hokkien), cubed and soaked for around 30 minutes then drained well (this is to reduce the saltiness of the radish)
- 1 cup dried shrimps, rinsed and drained (omit to make this vegetarian)
- 1 cup peanuts, (pre-fried*; you can used store bought roasted Spanish peanuts)
- 2 pieces firm tofu, cubed and pre-fried
- 1 carrot; diced
- 4 - 5 red chillies, deseeded and cubed (optional)

- 3 pips garlic, peeled and minced
- 2 tbsp. cooking oil

*peanuts are usually deep fried to give a crunchier texture; but you can just pan fry or use store-bought roasted peanuts as well

For the seasoning:

- 1/2 tsp salt or to taste
- 1/2 tsp white pepper powder or to taste
- 1 tbsp. sugar or to taste
- 1 tbsp. light soy sauce or to taste

Method

- Deep fry firm tofu. Remove from oil, drain on kitchen towel and set aside.
- Heat the cooking oil in a wok. Sauté the minced garlic until fragrant and slightly browned. Add the dried shrimps (if using) and cubed pickled radish. Sauté till fragrant, about 2-3 mins. Add the long beans/French beans and deep-fried firm tofu cubes. Stir fry for 1 min or so.
- Add all the seasoning and sauté until the beans are cooked (do not overcook; beans must be firm and crunchy).
- Finally, add the chilies and fried peanut. Stir till well-mixed. Taste and adjust seasoning, if required. Serve with hot steamed rice or rice congee.

Cooking demonstration with Menlo Park Library

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