

CROCODILE & SHRIMP LAKSA

INGREDIENTS:

- 1/3 cup vegetable oil
- 1 kg large shrimps - peeled, deveined, tails intact, heads and shells reserved.
- 2 tsp sea salt flakes
- 500 ml water
- 500 ml chicken stock
- 400 ml coconut milk
- 400 g smoked tofu, cut into cubes
- 200 g crocodile stew meat
- 80 g dried Vermicelli rice noodles
- 450 g fresh Hokkien noodles
- 125 g bean sprouts, blanched
- To serve: mint, coriander sprigs, and lime wedges

Laksa paste:

- 2 long red chillies, coarsely chopped
- 10 dried chillies, soaked in hot water for 20 min
- 50 g dried shrimp, soaked in hot water for 20 min
- 1 tbsp belacan (shrimp paste)
- 6 french or red eschalots, coarsely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 5 cm piece fresh ginger, sliced
- 5 cm piece fresh turmeric, sliced
- 3 lemongrass stalks, white part only, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp ground coriander
- 6 macadamia nuts, coarsely chopped

METHOD:

1. To make the prawn stock, heat 1 tbsp of the oil in a large saucepan over high heat. Add the reserved prawn heads, shells, and salt. Cook for 5 minutes, crushing the heads and shells with a wooden spoon until they turn vibrant orange. Add the water and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to a simmer. Simmer for 10 minutes, then strain through a fine sieve, discarding the solids, and reserving the stock. Set aside until needed.
2. To make the laksa paste, process the ingredients to a smooth paste in a food processor.
3. Heat the remaining ¼ cup of oil in a wok over medium-high heat. Cook half of the paste (see note) for 10-15 minutes until fragrant and the oil separates, stirring regularly. Add the prawn and chicken stocks, along with the coconut milk, and bring to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes, or until the oil separates from the coconut milk. Add the prawns and tofu puffs. Cook for 3 minutes, then add the crocodile meat, and cook for a further 30 seconds. Turn off the heat.
4. Meanwhile, place the Vermicelli and Hokkien noodles into two separate bowls. Pour over hot water and set aside until softened. Drain.
5. Divide the noodles and bean sprouts among bowls. Ladle in the stock and scatter with Vietnamese mint and coriander sprigs. Serve with lime wedges.

Note: The remaining laksa paste can be kept in an airtight container in the fridge for up to 1 month.

