



SPICY JAVANESE BEEF RENDANG

WITH SAMBAL AND GARLIC BEAN SPROUTS

SERVES 8-10

Known as one of the national dishes of Indonesia, rendang is a dish of slowly cooked meat stewed in a symphony of aromatics. It is said that making rendang requires patience, discretion, and perseverance, which I understood the first time I attempted it. The list of ingredients may be intimidating, but the result is tender beef intensely seasoned with the flavors of the islands. Rendang is typically served with a simple bowl of rice, but when I make it I dress it up with sambal ulek, garlic bean sprouts, and crunchy potato strings. There are a lot of steps to making this dish, but your perseverance will be rewarded when you take your first bite. And for the sandwich enthusiasts, the meat freezes and reheats perfectly on a crusty slider bun.

INGREDIENTS

2 stalks lemongrass, inner white parts only, chopped finely
6 makrut limes leaves, minced
6 garlic cloves, minced
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger
2 tablespoons minced fresh galangal root
2 pounds beef stew meat, cut into 1-inch pieces
Kosher salt
2 tablespoons coconut oil (or canola oil)
1 onion, chopped
1 cinnamon stick
2 star anise (whole)
8 whole cloves
2 tablespoons palm sugar (or brown sugar)
1 teaspoon ground coriander
1 teaspoon ground cumin

1 teaspoon black pepper
2 cups water
1 tablespoon soy sauce

Cooked rice
Sambal Ulek (recipe follows)

Garlicky Bean Sprouts (recipe follows)

Crunchy Potato Topping (recipe follows)

PROCESS:

In a food processor, blend the lemongrass, lime leaves, garlic, ginger, and galangal into a coarse paste, adding a few drops of water, if necessary. Sprinkle the beef with 1 teaspoon salt. In a large pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the beef and cook, turning occasionally, until lightly browned. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the beef to a plate and set aside, leaving the juices in the pot. Add the onion to



the pot and cook until soft. Stir in the paste mixture and cook for 1 minute. Meanwhile, place the cinnamon stick, star anise, and cloves in a piece of cheesecloth and tie with kitchen string (cinnamon can stick out of the pouch, if needed).

Return the beef to the pot and add the sugar, coriander, cumin, 1 teaspoon salt, the pepper, and water. Bring to a simmer and add the spice pouch. Cover the pot, reduce the heat to a low simmer, and cook for 2 hours, until the meat is tender.

Remove the spice pouch and stir in the soy sauce. Taste to see if more salt is needed. Serve over rice and top with sambal ulek, garlicky bean sprouts, and crunchy potatoes.

Sambal Ulek

makes about 3/4 cup

1/2 pound red chiles, stemmed, seeded, and finely chopped

1/4 cup chopped shallot

1 large tomato, seeded and finely chopped

1 tablespoon palm sugar Juice of 1 lime

1 teaspoon kosher salt

Place all ingredients in the bowl of a food processor and pulse until mixture is a coarse paste, adding a tablespoon of water, if needed. Store in refrigerator up to one week.

Garlicky Bean Sprouts

serves 4 to 6

1 tablespoon coconut oil

2 shallots, minced

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 serrano chile, minced

1 pound bean sprouts

Fresh basil leaves, torn into small pieces

1/2 teaspoon kosher salt

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Heat the oil in a skillet over medium-high heat. Add the shallots, garlic, and chile and cook for 1 minute. Add the bean sprouts, stirring, until softened, about 1 minute. Remove from the heat and stir in basil, salt, and pepper. Serve at once.



Crunchy Potato Topping

makes 2 cups

2 1/2 cups fried shoestring potatoes (from a can or bag)

2 tablespoons coconut oil

1 teaspoon minced garlic

1 teaspoon minced makrut lime leaf

Put the potatoes in a plastic bag and use a meat pounder or small saucepan to crush them into pieces about 1/4-inch long. In a small skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. Add the garlic and lime leaf and cook for 1 minute, until the garlic is fragrant and just beginning to brown. Stir in the potatoes, coating with the garlic and lime leaf. Remove from the heat and let cool. Store in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks.