



Indonesian Fish Soup

SERVES 6

It was a humid and sticky night in Ubud, and my friends and I went to dinner at a popular restaurant known best for its whole roasted pig. Diana was a pescatarian and hated to see pigs spinning over open fire, which was exactly what was happening inside the restaurant. She chose the fish soup for her dinner, and I have to admit it was better than any pork dish I sampled that night. It was served in bowls made of coconut shells and topped with fresh greens and sprouts. I've done my best to replicate that soup, and I've come very close. I use whatever white fish I can get at the time, and often I squeeze lime juice into each bite for a little extra zing.

INGREDIENTS

Bumbu Spice Paste:

2 teaspoons coriander seed
½ cup shallots, minced
2 tablespoons garlic, minced
2 teaspoons turmeric
2 tablespoons ginger root, minced
1 tablespoon sugar
½ teaspoon kosher salt
½ teaspoon chile powder
¼ cup lime juice

Soup:

2 tablespoons coconut oil
2 pounds white fish, cut into 1" pieces
14 ounces coconut milk

4 cups fish stock (recipe follows)

1 teaspoon kosher salt
2 cups bean sprouts
1 cup spinach leaves, torn
2 scallions, thinly sliced
½ cup Thai basil

Fish Stock:

1 pound fish bones
1 onion, quartered
2 stalks celery, cut into 3" slices
2 garlic cloves
2 bay leaves
1 lemon, halved
5 black peppercorns
2 teaspoons kosher salt



PROCESS:

Bumbu Spice Paste:

In a food processor, blend the bumbu spice mixture until it is a coarse paste.

Fish Stock:

In a 4-quart pot add all the ingredients and cover with 8 cups of water. Bring to a low simmer and cook for 1 ½ hours. Remove from heat and let cool for 30 minutes. Strain through a sieve into a pitcher, discarding solids. After using in the soup, freeze any remaining stock for another use.

Soup:

In a 4-quart pot, heat the coconut oil and sauté spice paste over medium high heat for 5 minutes. Stir in fish pieces and cook until fish is opaque, 8-10 minutes. Add coconut milk, fish stock, and salt and bring to a simmer, cooking for 10 minutes. Add bean sprouts, spinach leaves, scallions, and basil and cook another 5 minutes. Taste to see if more salt is needed and serve in soup bowls.