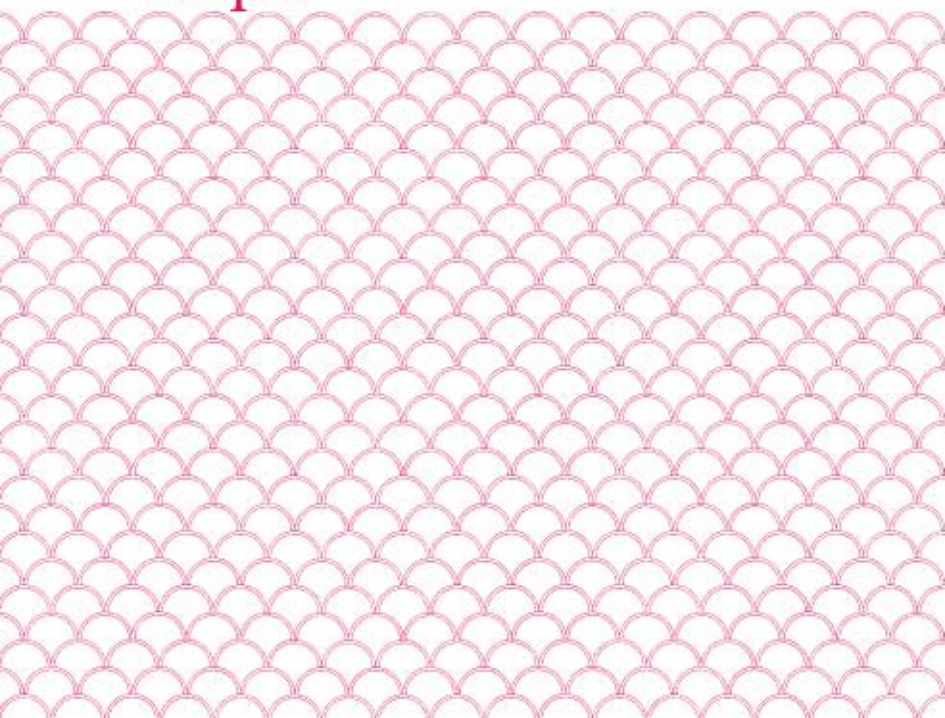


# irenès peranakan recipes



Iren's  
peranakan  
recipes



---

# memories & recipes

---



**"Girls have to  
do girls' things."**

With her cherished recipe  
for womanhood, Mother  
strived to be a super woman  
and came pretty close.



---

SHE THREW HERSELF INTO COOKING, sewing, flower arrangement and gardening. Her two fiercest passions – which I never inherited – were cooking and flower arrangement. She sewed almost anything and everything she could get her hands on: the curtains in the house, fancy clothes for my sister and me, our school uniforms. She arranged flowers to transform the house, landscaped our garden, and entertained friends with her famed cooking – on top of a full-time job. Thinking about Mother exhausts me. And yes, she was the disciplinarian in the family.

She was also the president of the North Division of the Singapore Girl Guides Association even though she had never been a Guide. She was the vice-president of the Women's Society of Christian Services (WSCS) in the Methodist Church in Singapore, in which she travelled all over the world attending conferences. She was also one of the founding members of the Glowing Years Ministry (GYM) of the Methodist Church, and was president of the Ang Mo Kio Methodist Church WSCS and Senior Fellowship for many years. All this obviously kept her busy, but she held on to her two passions. And boy, how she pursued them to the end.

She took flower arrangement classes soon after marrying my dad and before long she was beautifying the church with fresh blooms. Friends admired her work so much, they started asking her to do weddings and other functions. She did this till retirement, when she started a flower business with my dad.

---

Her cooking and baking skills were also well known. She loved to cook for others, and enjoyed having them gush over her food. She often entertained at home. When invited over to her friend's place, she would take a home-cooked dish. Mee siam was her signature dish, and all my friends used to jump at the chance of being invited home for dinner, especially if mee siam was on the menu. Many of her fans would eat mee siam only when cooked by her. Her beef rendang was another specialty. In her younger days, it was not uncommon for the family to host parties for 40 to 50 people at a time, and she would single-handedly cook for everyone. That was a far cry from when she couldn't even cook rice.

Mother came from a quintessentially Teochew family. The household was marshalled by my late grandmother, who was the 'highest authority in the land' and would not tolerate any of her six children in the kitchen. They had servants to do all the housework and cooking under her strict supervision. When my mother got married at the age of 24, she could cook nothing. My father had to teach her the few simple dishes that he knew, and they got by eating simply. My mother knew that she had to do something about it.

---



My Family

My father came from a traditional Peranakan family. They spoke Nonya-Malay at home, and the Peranakan culture was ingrained in their upbringing. His mother was a great cook, but unfortunately both parents passed away before he was out of his teens. Since my dad knew what good Nonya food was, it was only natural that he wanted my mum to whip up the traditional Nonya dishes that he so loved. Mother enrolled in cooking classes and the rest is history and gravy.

Through trial and error, swapping recipes with friends, bombarding cooking classes, gleaning cooking tips from neighbours and friends... and also my father's discerning taste buds, my mother's culinary genie emerged.

My dad was always very supportive. He would accompany her to the market, helping her buy the freshest ingredients. In the kitchen, you would find him cutting, dicing, pounding and washing. Maybe that was his way of working up a big appetite.

Mother loved nothing more than delving hungrily into cookbooks. She had piles of them, always on her bedside table, which she would read in bed before sleeping. She never found the time for fiction or non-fiction. She relished comparing

---

---

recipes, taking notes, and bringing them to life in her magical kingdom, or rather, kitchen. She was on a perpetual quest for the perfect recipe, or simply a new one. Even on holiday trips abroad, it was normal for my mother to talk to the restaurant chef if she enjoyed the food. On one Tasmanian trip, she woke up at 4am to help the bakers at the local bakery prepare bread for the start of the day.

When my sister and I were planning to go to the UK for further studies, my mother decided to compile all the recipes of the dishes we had grown to love. She wanted us to take the recipes with us, and hopefully be able to cook some of our family favourites while we were there. It took her many moons to write and compile them.

Having done so, she decided to put them to good use. As she was already 55, and planning for retirement at that time, she thought of starting her own cooking class. After years of cooking for others, and knowing how much people loved her food, she was confident it would fly. In fact, the fear of failure was rarely on her menu.

She planned the recipes meticulously. With a balanced course, she placed her first advertisement in the Straits Times Classifieds. Ten ladies attended her first class. With that fillip, she began to teach on a regular basis. People from all walks of life passed through her kitchen. Impeccable tai-tais, clueless newly-wed wives, Filipino maids, and tough guys with a soft spot for cooking. She even taught a few students who went on to open stalls selling Nonya food based on her recipes. I attended a few of her classes, and her students really had quite a good



---

time, not only learning how to cook, but socialising and making new friends.

As word of her cooking classes spread, organisations started approaching her to conduct classes for them. She taught at classes organised by the Social Development Unit, the Welfare Club of Tan Tock Seng Hospital and church groups. With all these classes, she was able to fine-tune her recipes even further. She enjoyed sharing her cooking skills with others, and never withheld any 'secrets'; her students always came back for more. Which resonated nicely with those of us at home.

You see, Mother would always cooked an extra portion for us the day she had classes. So we always wanted to know which dish she was going to teach for the day. Somehow, the dishes tasted better. Perhaps it was because she was 'guided' by her own recipes!

Writing a cookbook had always stimulated and eluded Mother. With her busy schedule, her church work, the flower business, and being a full-time grandmother to my sister's three beautiful children, the aspiration just slipped by. We feel that perhaps it would be good to share with you some recipes of the family's favourite dishes. Now that we have finally managed to get this little cookbook published, I hope that this will bring joy to those who try cooking these recipes, as much as she enjoyed cooking them herself.

And oh, feel free to improvise and improve on the recipes. Because there's no better appetizer than a sprinkling of your own delicious imagination.

**Elaine Yeo**

---

# Contents

<u>Soup</u>	<u>Poultry</u>	<u>Meat</u>	<u>Seafood</u>
Hee Peow Soup .....12	Ayam Assam	Satay Ayam or	Assam Sotong
Sotong Soup .....13	Tumis .....18	Satay Babi .....32	Goreng .....44
Bakwan	Petis Hati .....19	Satay Lembu or	Sambal Sotong
Kepeting .....14	Curry Ayam .....20	Satay Kambing .....34	Goreng .....45
	Ayam Siyow .....21	Satay Babi Rebus .....35	Sambal Sotong
	Satay Ayam	Penang Nonya	Sumbat .....46
	Rebus .....22	Ngoh Hiang .....36	Assam Udang
	Gulai Ayam	Penang Nonya Deep	Goreng .....47
	Kunyit .....23	Fried Cha Shao .....37	Gulai Lemak
	Ayam Buah	Babi Panggang .....38	Nanas .....48
	Keluak .....24	Babi Assam .....39	Sambal Udang .....49
	Itek Tim .....26		Udang Garam
	Itek Chin .....27		Assam .....50
			Udang Goreng
			Chilli .....51
			Udang Goreng .....52
			Udang Pedas
			Nanas .....53
			Sambal Udang
			Kering .....54
			Ikan Curry .....55
			Gulai Ikan
			Assam .....56
			Ikan Gulai
			Penang .....57
			Kuah Ladah .....58
			Otak Otak .....59
			Sambal
			Lengkong .....60

<u>Vegetables</u>	<u>Padang</u>	<u>Rice &amp; Noodles</u>	<u>Kueh</u>
Chap Chye .....64	Ikan Masak	Nasi Lemak .....108	Kueh Ubi
Fried Kiam Chye .....65	Lemak Kuning .....80	Nasi Kunyit .....109	Kayu Kelapa .....120
Gado Gado .....66	Ikan Goreng	Mee Siam .....110	Kueh Gula Melaka
Sambal Terong	Berlada .....81	Mee Rebus .....112	Ubi Kayu .....121
Bendi .....68	Ikan Bakar .....82	Laksa .....114	Kueh Ubi
Sambal Tau Kwa .....69	Ikan Gulai .....83		Kayu Rebus .....122
Tau Kwa Goreng .....70	Ikan Masak		Kueh Talam
Sambal Timun .....71	Lemak Merah .....84		Ubi Kayu .....123
Kueh Pie Tee .....72	Ikan Frikkadels .....85		Kueh Keria .....124
Achar with	Fried Ikan Bilis .....86		Kueh Bingkah .....125
Rempah .....74	Chicken Korma .....87		Lepat Ubi Kayu .....126
	Ayam Panggang .....88		Lepat Pisang .....127
	Ayam Masak		Goreng Pisang .....128
	Merah .....89		Kueh Pisang (Kueh
	Ayam Goreng		Naga Sari) .....129
	Padang .....90		Kueh Kodok .....130
	Ayam Rendang .....92		Seri Kaya .....131
	Rendang Padang .....93		Sago Gula
	Curry Kambing .....94		Melaka .....132
	Daging		Abok-Abok
	Panggang .....95		Sago .....133
	Udang Kelio .....96		Pulut Terigu .....134
	Sotong Sambal .....97		Pulut Inti .....135
	Sayur Loday .....98		Pengat .....136
	Terong Goreng .....99		Kueh Wajek .....137
	Sambal Telur .....100		Kueh Sarlat .....138
	Sambal Kachang		Kueh Dadar .....140
	Panjang .....101		Kueh Lapis .....142
	Kachang Panjang		Kueh Lapis
	Goreng .....102		Beras .....143
	Achar Nanas .....103		Kueh Kosui .....144
	Achar Bening .....104		Iced Delima .....145
			Bubor Pulut
			Hitam .....146
			Bubor Kachang
			Hijau .....147
			Bubor Cha-Cha with
			Pisang Raja .....148
			Pengat Pisang
			Durian .....149
			Ang Koo Kueh .....150
			Onde-Onde .....152

## Irene's Peranakan recipes

Published by Epigram - 75 Sophia Road Singapore 228156. Tel 65-6292 4436. Fax 65-6292 4414. www.epigram.com.sg  
Copyright©2006 Epigram. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior consent from the publisher.  
Second printing, 2007.

Printed in Singapore.  
National Library Board Singapore Cataloguing in Publication Data  
Irene, 1938-2004.

Irene's Peranakan Recipes. - Singapore : Epigram, c2006.

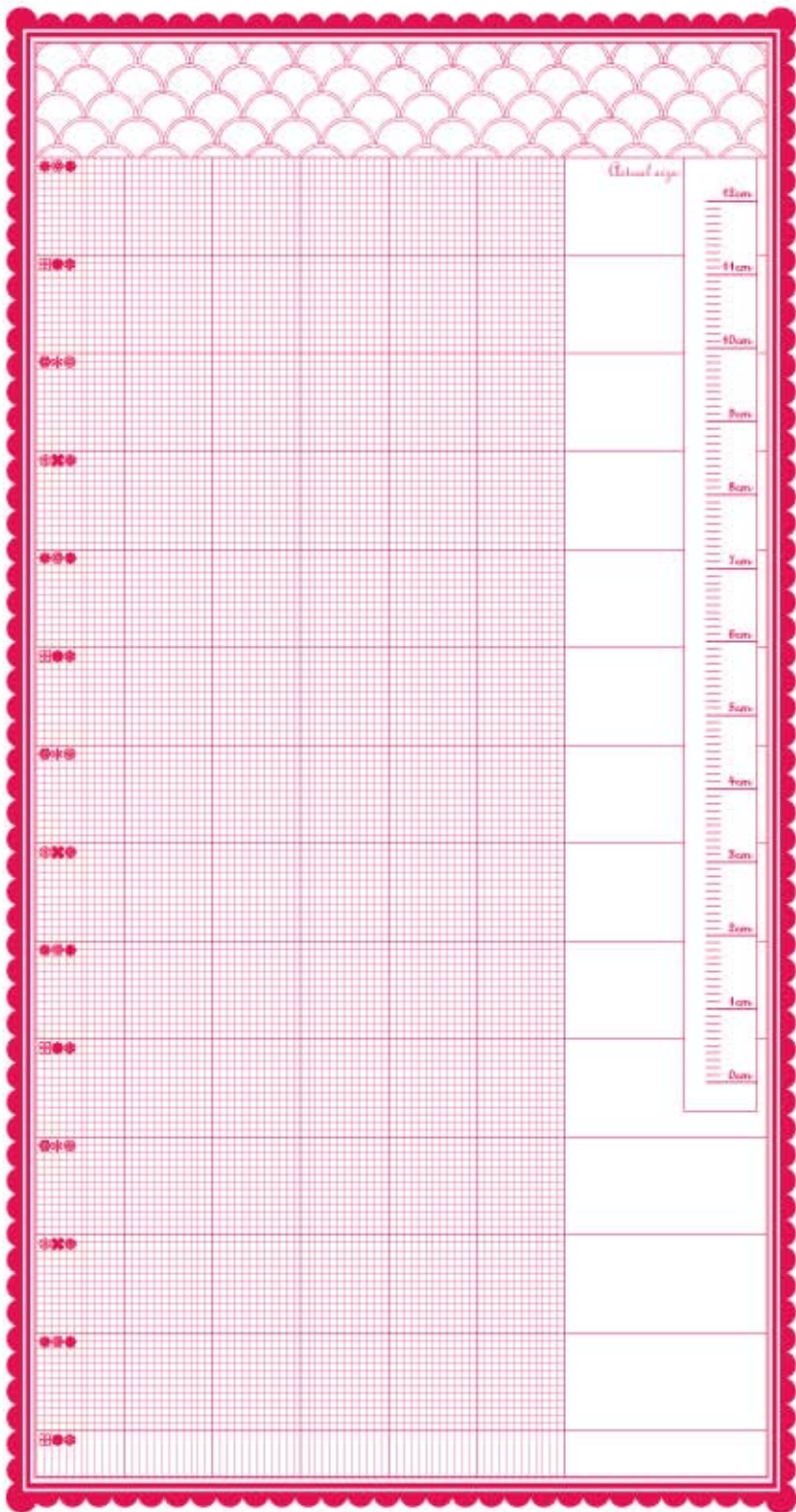
p. cm.  
ISBN-13 : 978-981-05-7015-6  
ISBN-10 : 981-05-7015-5

I. Cookery, Peranakan. I. Title.

TX724.S555

641.595957 -- dc22

SL52006047186



P32/Meat

## SATAY AYAM OR SATAY BABI

CHICKEN OR PORK SPICY KEBABS

**(A):**

- 500 gm skinned chicken breast or boneless pork loin
- 1 tbsp tamarind (mixed with 4 tbsps water, strain liquid for use) – only for chicken
- 50 satay sticks
- 4 tbsps thick coconut milk (squeeze extract from 1 grated coconut)

**Grind together (B):**

- 1 stalk lemon grass (discard outer green layer, use white portion only)
- 8 shallots

**Add (C):**

- ½ tbsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp tumeric powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp brown or white sugar
- 4 tbsps cooking oil

**Garnish:**

- cucumber (sliced)
- onions (quartered)

Cut the meat into 2cm square and 1cm thick pieces. If using chicken, mix together with the tamarind water. Place ingredients (B) and (C) in a bowl. Add the meat pieces and mix well. Set aside for at least 1 hour.

Thread the satay sticks through the marinated meat pieces. Ensure that one end of each stick is completely covered by the meat. Brush the meat with coconut milk (do this just before grilling).

Grill over a charcoal fire, brushing the satay occasionally with oil. Turn the meat over several times whilst grilling.

Serve with satay sauce, cucumber slices and onions.

P33/

## SAUCE FOR SATAY

- 1 tbsp tamarind (mixed with 150ml water, strain liquid for use)
- 3 tbsps sugar
- 1½ tps salt
- 2 stalks lemon grass (bruised, discard outer green layer, use white portion only)
- 5 tbsps cooking oil
- 400 gm peanuts (roasted and ground)
- 400 ml water
- 200 ml coconut milk (add 100ml water to 1 grated coconut, squeeze mixture for coconut milk)

**Grind together:**

- 3 cm length galangal
- 2 candlenuts
- 10 shallots
- 4 cloves garlic
- 15 dried chillies (soaked, washed and seeded)
- 1 tsp shrimp paste (belachan)

Heat a saucepan till hot, then add the oil. When the oil is hot, add the ground ingredients and lemon grass. Stir fry the ingredients till fragrant. Add the tamarind water and bring to a boil.

Next, add the sugar, salt, ground peanuts and water. Lower the heat and simmer till the sauce thickens.

**To serve:** Pour sauce into individual serving bowls. Place the satay on a serving platter with sliced cucumbers, onions and ketupat (compressed rice cakes).



P34/Meat

## SATAY LEMBU OR SATAY KAMBING

BEEF OR MUTTON SPICY KEBABS

**(A):**

- 500 gm beef or mutton (topside)
- 1 tbsp tamarind (mixed with 4 tbsps water, strain liquid for use)
- 40 satay sticks

**Grind together (B):**

- 4 slices galangal
- 4 slices ginger
- 1 stalk lemon grass (discard outer green layer, use white portion only)
- 2 candlenuts
- 8 shallots
- 2 cloves garlic

**Add (C):**

- ½ tsp coriander powder
- 1 tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp tumeric powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1½ tbsps brown sugar
- 6 tbsps cooking oil

**Garnish:**

- cucumber (sliced)
- onions (quartered)

Cut the meat into 2cm square and 1cm thick pieces. Mix with the tamarind water. Marinate the meat with ingredients (B) and (C). Mix well and set aside for at least 4 hours.

Thread the satay sticks through the marinated meat pieces. Ensure that one end of each stick is completely covered by the meat.

Grill over a charcoal fire, brushing the satay occasionally with oil. Turn the meat over several times whilst grilling.

Serve with satay sauce, cucumber slices and onions.

P35/

## SATAY BABI REBUS

BOILED SPICED PORK

- 500 gm lean pork (sliced)
- 200 ml coconut milk (add 125ml water to ½ grated coconut, squeeze mixture for coconut milk)
- cucumber (sliced)

**Grind together:**

- 4 stalks lemon grass (discard outer green layer, use white portion only)
- 15 dried chillies (soaked, washed and seeded)
- 4 candlenuts
- 16 shallots
- 1 tsp shrimp paste (belachan)

**Marinade:**

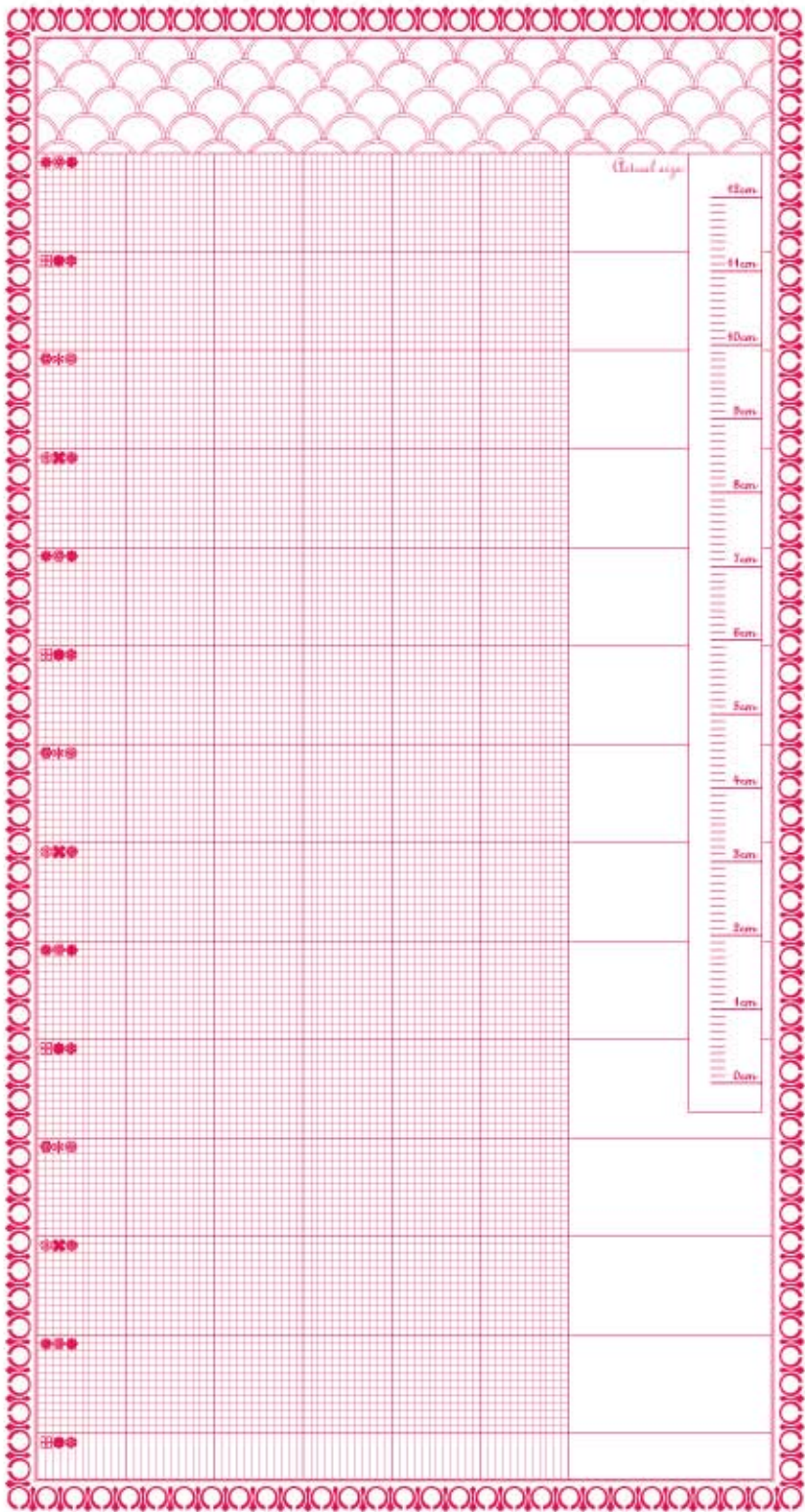
- 1 tsp salt
- ½ tsp pepper
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tbsp cooking oil

Mix the sliced pork with the marinade ingredients, coconut milk and the ground ingredients. Set aside for at least 1 hour.

Place all the ingredients in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer till the meat is cooked.

Serve with cucumber slices.





P120/*Kueh*

## KUEH UBI KAYU KELAPA TAPIOCA SNOW SQUARES

- 800 gm tapioca
- 250 gm palm sugar (boiled with water to make 200ml syrup)
- ½ grated coconut with skin removed
- ¼ tsp salt

Add the salt to the grated coconut and steam for 20 minutes. Skin the tapioca and cut crosswise into 6cm lengths and steam for about 30 minutes or till it softens. Set aside to cool.

Remove the fibres in the centre of the tapioca chunks. Mash the tapioca with a fork to obtain a coarse texture. Gradually pour in the syrup and mix thoroughly.

Put the sweetened mash tapioca into a 25cm (10-inch) baking tin. Press it in firmly. Leave aside to cool. Do not place in the refrigerator. When cool, cut it into small 2cm squares and roll in the grated coconut.

P121/

## KUEH GULA MELAKA UBI KAYU TAPIOCA IN PALM SUGAR

- 600 gm tapioca
- 150 gm palm sugar (finely chopped)
- 150 gm white sugar
- 300 ml thick coconut milk (add 200ml water to ½ grated coconut, squeeze mixture for thick coconut milk)
- 400 ml thin coconut milk (add 300ml water to the same ½ grated coconut, squeeze mixture for thin coconut milk)
- 4 pandan leaves (shredded into 1cm width strips and knotted into 2 bundles)
- ½ tsp salt

Pour the thin coconut milk into a saucepan. Add the chopped palm sugar and stir over low heat until the palm sugar is dissolved. Strain the syrup and set aside.

Skin the tapioca, cut it in half lengthwise and remove the centre fibres. Clean and cut into 6cm lengths.

Boil the tapioca in water with one bundle of the pandan leaves till the tapioca softens. Drain.

Simmer the white sugar with the thick coconut milk, palm sugar syrup and the other bundle of pandan leaves over low heat till the sugar dissolves.

Stir in the tapioca and add salt to taste. Simmer for 1 minute.

P122/Kueh

## KUEH UBI KAYU REBUS STEAMED TAPIOCA CAKE

- 600 gm grated tapioca
- 300 ml water
- 2 drops red or green food colouring
- ½ grated coconut with skin removed
- ¼ tsp salt
- 250 gm palm sugar

Add ¼ teaspoon of salt to the grated coconut and steam for 20 minutes. Set aside.

Boil the palm sugar with 100ml water to make syrup. Set aside.

Mix the grated tapioca with 200ml water. Add the food colouring. Put the mixture in a 25cm (10-inch) baking tin and steam for 30 minutes or till cooked. Remove and set aside to cool.

Cut into 2cm squares and roll each square in the grated white coconut. Serve with the palm sugar syrup.

P123/

## KUEH TALAM UBI KAYU STEAMED TAPIOCA AND COCONUT CAKE



- 570 ml coconut milk (add 400ml water to 1 grated coconut, squeeze mixture for coconut milk)

### Top layer:

- 90 gm corn flour
- 1½ tps salt

### Tapioca layer:

- 600 gm grated tapioca
- 75 gm sugar
- 100 gm palm sugar (finely chopped)
- ½ tsp salt

**To prepare the tapioca layer:** Mix the grated tapioca, sugar, palm sugar and ½ teaspoon salt in a large mixing bowl. Add 210ml of coconut milk.

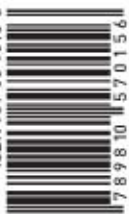
Lightly grease a 25cm (10-inch) baking tin with butter. Pour in the mixture and steam for 30-40 minutes or till it sets.

**To prepare the top layer:** Mix the remaining 360ml coconut milk with the corn flour and 1½ teaspoon salt.

Pour over the steamed tapioca layer and continue steaming for a further 15 minutes.

Cool before cutting into 5 x 2½cm slices. Remove from baking tin. Serve.

ISBN 981-05-7015-5



9 789810 570156