

Asam Pedas- Finger Licking Good Eating out in Kuala Lumpur is a thrilling experience. You never know what you're going to find. There are so many varieties of cuisine that one is spoilt for choice. A few years ago a friend invited us to a small eatery off the highway. Unimpressive, simple and practically bare, the food we had there was simply divine. The fish caught my fancy and after that we had it whenever we had the opportunity. Learnt how to cook it and don't be surprised when you actually lick your fingers in the end.

Asam Pedas is a typical Malaysian Dish. Asam means sour and Pedas means spicy, so the dish is a classic hot and sour delight. This is one of the most satisfying dishes I have had.

1 whole pomfret clean, wash & drain; 6 small ladies finger cut diagonally into two each; 1 tomato, quartered; 1 tsp fish curry powder or more to taste; 2 sprigs of [daun kesum \(Vietnamese mint/Vietnamese coriander\)](#); 2 tbsp cooking oil; 1 tbsp brown sugar; salt to taste.

Masala

1 clove garlic; 1 stalk of lemon grass (white part only); 5 sambar onions; 1 tsp chilly powder more or less to taste; 1/2 tbsp belacan (prawn paste).

Tamarind Pulp

Mix 3 tbsp tamarind pulp in 1 1/2 cup of water. Keep for 10 minutes and strain for use.

For Fish Curry Powder

200 gm ground coriander
75 gm ground aniseed
75 gm ground cumin
50 gm - black and white pepper
75 gm - chilli powder
35 gm turmeric powder

Grind Separately: 1 cinnamon stick, about 5 cm long; 5gm cardamoms, with pod; 3 cloves; 3 star anise;
20gm fenugreek (methi seeds).

Mix together and store in airtight container.

Malaysian Spicy Fish

Written by Ruth Isaac

Blend the masala and keep aside. Heat oil and fry the masala until fragrant (a few minutes). Add the strained tamarind, fish curry powder and bring to boil. Next add the quartered tomato and ladies fingers and bring to boil.

Add the fish, salt, and brown sugar. Simmer on low heat for 5 minutes or until the fish is cooked. Serve hot with white rice.

NB: **Vietnamese Mint** is also known as **Vietnamese Coriander**

. It has a strong minty peppery flavour and is sold in small bunches with pointed leaves on the stem.

Substitute with

Mint (Pudina) or equal parts of Mint & Coriander.

Belacan is nothing but shrimp paste. Substitute with Anchovy fillets if desired.