



Thai Fish Cakes (Tod Man Pla)

Thai fish cakes, tod man pla, have a springy texture, achieved by repeatedly 'slapping' the minced fish against the side of the bowl to develop the protein. Red fish works particularly well for fishcakes as it readily develops this texture, if you use a different fish, the slapping is even more important and you may need to add a tablespoon or so of beaten egg to help bind the mixture.

Makes 8 pieces



INGREDIENTS

- 500g redfish fillets, skin off, pin-boned and chopped (1lb 2oz)
- 2 tablespoons Thai-style red curry paste (40ml)
- 2 tablespoons fish sauce (40ml)
- Pinch castor sugar
- 50g green beans, finely sliced (2oz)
- 1 kaffir lime leaf, very finely sliced
- Vegetable oil, for deep-frying

Ajat

- ¼ cup castor sugar (55g)
- ¼ cup water (60ml)
- ¼ cup distilled white vinegar (60ml)
- Salt flakes, to taste
- ½ Lebanese cucumber, seeded and finely diced
- 2 red shallots, finely sliced
- ½ long red chilli, seeded and finely chopped

METHOD

1. Make Ajat: Heat sugar, water, vinegar and salt in a small saucepan until sugar dissolves; set aside to cool. Stir in cucumber, shallot and chilli, transfer to a serving dish and set aside.
2. Place fish, curry paste, fish sauce and sugar in a food processor and blend for a minute or so, until well pureed. Transfer to a large bowl.
3. Gather handfuls of the mixture and repeatedly slap it against the side of the bowl for several minutes, until it becomes firmer and holds together.
4. Mix in bean and lime leaf.
5. Heat oil in a wok or saucepan.
6. With lightly oiled hands, divide the mixture into 8 even-sized balls.
7. Gently press each ball between oiled palms to form patties.
8. Fry fish cakes for 2–3 minutes each side, until well coloured. Drain on paper towel.
9. Serve tod man pla with Ajat.