



Sweet & Sour Fish

Marinating prawns in bicarbonate of soda is a common trick to ensure they're plump and juicy when cooked. It's called 'velveting' as it also gives them a lovely smooth texture – and it works just as well with meat and fish. Bicarb is alkaline, so lowers the pH of the protein which prevents the muscle fibres from contracting too much during cooking, therefore they retain more moisture and stay juicy. Use any firm white fish fillets, or even prawns, for this recipe.

Serves 2



INGREDIENTS

- 300g ling fillets, skin-off, pin-boned
- 1 teaspoon bi-carb soda
- ¼ cup plain flour
- ¼ cup potato starch
- Vegetable oil, for deep-frying
- ½ teaspoon salt flakes, crushed
- ½ teaspoon castor sugar
- Roti or steamed rice, for serving

Black Vinegar Sauce

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 red shallot, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- ½ cup water
- 2 tablespoons black vinegar
- 3 teaspoons dark soy sauce
- 3 teaspoons castor sugar
- 2 teaspoons oyster sauce
- 1 teaspoon potato starch, mixed with 1 teaspoon water

METHOD

1. Cut fish into about 12 pieces.
2. Mix bi-carb soda with 2 tablespoons of water in a small bowl.
3. Add fish, mix well and set aside for 30 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, make Black Vinegar Sauce: heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat, add shallot and garlic and cook for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally, until just starting to colour. Add remaining ingredients, stir until boiling, remove from heat, cover and set aside.
5. Sift flour and potato starch into a bowl and set aside.
6. When ready to cook, heat oil in a wok or saucepan.
7. Meanwhile, rinse fish quickly under cold water and use paper towel to pat dry.
8. Mix with salt and sugar and set aside.
9. Whisk about 110ml water into the flour mixture, just enough to form a thin batter.
10. Add fish to the batter and toss to coat well.
11. Working in batches, drain off excess batter, lower fish into the oil and fry for 3–5 minutes, until golden brown. Transfer to a paper towel-lined rack over a plate.
12. Repeat with remaining fish.
13. Meanwhile, return Black Vinegar Sauce to a low heat.
14. Place about a third of the sauce in a serving bowl, add half the fish, drizzle with some more sauce, add remaining fish and drizzle remaining sauce over the top.
15. Serve immediately with roti or steamed rice.