



Lemon-cured Tuna with Vietnamese Herb Salad

One of my favourite Vietnamese dishes is bo tai chanh, a salad of beef cured in lemon juice, and the same method works just as well with tuna in this pescatarian version. Whatever protein you use, it's a very quick dish to prepare once you have all the ingredients on hand, and it's great as a starter, main course, or part of a shared feast. As the acid of the lemon 'cooks' the fish, slicing it thinly is important, so sharpen your knife before you start; it's also important to use sashimi-grade fish as it is still technically being eaten raw. If raw fish isn't your thing, stir-fry it for a few seconds to just sear it, then add it to the marinade. This simple salad relies on a few key flavours, including spicy white pepper, so be sure it's freshly ground and be generous – either measure the ½ teaspoon or give it a good 8–10 grinds of the pepper mill.

Serves as part of a shared meal

INGREDIENTS

- 1 x 300g piece sashimi-grade tuna
- 2 sprigs betel leaves
- 1 tablespoon Sweet Fish Sauce
- 1 tablespoon crushed roasted peanuts
- Steamed jasmine rice, for serving
- Pickled minced chilli, for serving

Lemon Marinade

- 1½ large juicy lemons, juiced and strained
- 2 teaspoons fish sauce
- 1 tablespoon castor sugar
- ½ teaspoon crushed salt flakes
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground white pepper

Herb Salad

- 1 handful bean sprouts, tailed (about 60g)
- 1 bunch saw leaf coriander, sliced
- 2 tablespoons sliced Thai basil leaves
- 2 sprigs rice paddy herb
- 1 red shallot, deep-fried
- 1 clove garlic, deep-fried
- 1 teaspoon fried garlic oil
- 1 teaspoon roasted rice powder



METHOD

1. Trim any visible sinew from the tuna and discard it. Place tuna in a sealed bag in the freezer for about 1 hour to firm it up (taking care not to leave it so long that it freezes solid).
2. Meanwhile, make Lemon Marinade: combine all ingredients in a bowl and set aside.
3. Make Herb Salad: combine all ingredients in a large bowl and set aside.
4. Finely slice tuna, mix through Lemon Marinade and set aside for 10 minutes.
5. Meanwhile, arrange betel leaves on a platter.
6. Drain tuna, discarding the Lemon Marinade. Toss through the Herb Salad and arrange on top of the betel leaves.
7. Drizzle Sweet Fish Sauce over the top and sprinkle with peanuts.
8. Eat the tuna and salad wrapped in the betel leaves with rice and pickled chilli served on the side.