



Sambal Goreng (Fried Chilli Paste)

I love having good condiments on hand to add flavour to quick and easy meals. In Southeast Asia that's often a sambal, and sambal goreng is one of the easiest and tastiest. Sambal means 'chilli' and goreng means 'fried' and I use this fried chilli paste in mee goreng and rojak sauce, serve it alongside sambal skate, and dollop it onto nasi goreng. For a really quick snack I toss it through reheated leftover rice with a drizzle of sesame oil. It may be worth making a double batch! Sometimes 'sambal goreng' refers to a dish, very popular at Malay weddings, made from vegetables, seafood or tofu mixed with fried chilli paste. I use medium-sized chillies (about 1g each), which gives a little heat but not too much, use smaller ones for more punch or larger ones for a milder flavour. Regardless of chilli size, use a small spoon (not your fingers) to remove seeds and membrane, as their heat is unpleasantly coarse, and wash your hands well immediately afterwards.

Makes about ½ cup

INGREDIENTS

- 25g dried red chillies
- ½ brown onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 50ml vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 teaspoons castor sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt flakes
- 1 tablespoon tamarind liquid

While quantities don't have to be too precise for this recipe, you want a good balance of onion and chilli; use half a 200–300g onion or 1 small onion of about 120–180g.



METHOD

1. Seed chillies and soak them in warm water for at least 30 minutes. Squeeze to remove excess water then chop as finely as possible.
2. Place in a food processor with onion and garlic and grind to as fine a paste as possible.
3. Heat oil in a small saucepan over low heat.
4. Add chilli mixture and cook for 15–20 minutes, stirring regularly to loosen the bits sticking to the base of the pan, until it smells toasty and the oil starts to separate; after about 10 minutes stir more frequently to prevent it burning.
5. Stir in tomato paste, sugar and salt and cook for a further 5 minutes, stirring frequently.
6. Remove from heat and stir in tamarind liquid.
7. Transfer to a clean bowl to cool.
8. When cool, cover and store in the fridge for 2–3 weeks.