



Stir-fried Pipsis with Lemongrass, Chilli & Garlic

There's nothing like a quick and easy stir-fry when you're short on time; this one is inspired by a recipe from chef Mark Jensen of Vietnamese restaurant Red Lantern in Darlinghurst. I make it with Goolwa pipsis from South Australia as I usually have a bag in the freezer for quick meals, but this simple marinade makes everything taste great so use any bivalves or crustaceans, such as blue mussels, vongole or prawns. I find a glass of Vigna del Cristo, a pale pink dry Lambrusco from Emilia-Romagna, works particularly well with the spice in this dish.

Serves 2



INGREDIENTS

- 4 stalks lemongrass, white part only finely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 tablespoon Vietnamese pickled ground chilli (or chilli paste like sambal oelek)
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup fish sauce
- 1 tablespoon castor sugar
- 1kg pipsis
- Steamed jasmine rice, for serving

METHOD

1. Combine lemongrass, garlic, chilli, oil, fish sauce and sugar in a large bowl.
2. Add pipsis, toss to coat well, cover and set aside at room temperature for 30–60 minutes.
3. Heat a wok or large frying pan over high heat.
4. Add pipsis and marinade, reduce heat to medium, cover and cook for a couple of minutes, until shells start to open.
5. As each shell opens, remove it to a bowl. You may need to cover the pan for another 30 seconds or so to encourage the remainder to open. Once most are open, hold any unopened ones over the sink and use a blunt knife (such as a butter knife) to pry them open. If they smell good, they're fine to eat, otherwise discard them.
6. Serve with plenty of steamed rice; the sauce can be quite salty if it's taken a while for the pipsis to open, so start with a little and add more to taste.