



Rendang Tempe

Rendang was traditionally a way of preserving meat by long slow cooking in coconut oil, like a confit. Tempeh (or tempe) is a traditional Indonesian product made from whole cooked soybeans that have been fermented and moulded into blocks. Unlike its more neutral cousin tofu, tempeh has a pronounced savoury, slightly nutty flavour due to the fermentation. Also, unlike tofu, it stands up to long cooking very well, making it a great alternative to beef in a traditional rendang. If you prefer a saucier dish, reduce the cooking time and serve it before the tempeh has absorbed all of the coconut milk.

Serves 2–4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 red shallot, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 5 small red chillies, chopped
- ½ teaspoon finely chopped turmeric (or ¼ tsp ground)
- ½ teaspoon finely chopped galangal
- 410ml coconut milk
- 2 bay leaves, bruised
- ½ stalk lemongrass, bruised
- Freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
- 1 teaspoon salt flakes, or more to taste
- 250g tempeh, cut into large bite-sized pieces
- Steamed jasmine rice, for serving



METHOD

1. Place shallot, garlic, chilli, turmeric, galangal and 2 tablespoons of the coconut milk in the bowl of a food processor and blitz as finely as possible.
2. In a wok or saucepan small enough that the tempeh will be covered by the coconut milk, place the shallot paste, remaining coconut milk, bay leaves, lemongrass, nutmeg and salt. Stir to combine well then stir in tempeh.
3. Bring to the boil. Reduce heat until it's gently bubbling and cook for about 1½–2 hours, until coconut milk is quite thick and oil has started to separate; stir occasionally and adjust the temperature if necessary so it remains just gently bubbling.
4. Continue cooking for a further 30 minutes or so, stirring occasionally, until the coconut milk has reduced and the tempeh is starting to fry in the oil rather than poach in the milk.
5. Continue cooking for as long as you like, up to another hour, stirring frequently and scraping the bottom of the pan, until the rendang is as dry and dark as you prefer.
6. Discard lemongrass; taste and add more salt if needed.
7. Serve with steamed rice.