

Crispy Anchovies and Peanut Recipe

Ingredients:

Oil for deep-frying
6 tablespoons raw red-skinned peanuts
200 g dried anchovies (ikan bilis), cleaned and drained well
1 tablespoon tamarind pulp
4 tablespoons water
4 tablespoons oil
pinch of salt
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon tomato paste

Spice Paste:

5 red dried chilies, soaked until soften
5 fresh red chilies, seeds removed
200 g shallots, peeled
4 cloves garlic, peeled
1 small knob (about 2-cm) turmeric, peeled
1 teaspoon shrimp paste (belachan) - optional

Method:

Heat oil in a wok over medium-low heat until it ripples under the surface, but there is no haze, about 140°C. Add peanuts and fry, stirring frequently, for about 5 minutes or until golden (scrape skin off one to check). Remove from oil with a slotted spoon and drain on kitchen paper. Spread anchovies on a plate and microwave on high for 1½ minutes to make sure it is very dry. Alternatively, sun it for a while. Return oil to frying temperature, add anchovies and fry for 4 - 5 minutes or until crisp and golden brown. Drain well on kitchen paper. Discard oil. Grind spice paste ingredients until fine. Knead tamarind with water until pulp dissolves, then strain. Heat 4 tablespoons fresh oil in a clean wok over medium-high heat and fry spice paste for 6 - 10 minutes, until fragrant and thickened. Add tamarind liquid, salt, sugar, and tomato paste to taste (do not add too much salt as anchovies are salty by itself) and stir to blend well. Bring to a quick boil, add anchovies and peanuts and mix well, then dish up. Serve with steamed jasmine rice or "Nasi Lemak" - fragrant coconut rice.