

## Otak-Otak Panggang Recipe (Grilled Otak-Otak Recipe)

**Ingredients:** Serves 6

350 g (12½ oz) fish paste\*  
½ teaspoon salt  
2 tablespoons sugar  
¼ teaspoon seasoning powder  
1 young turmeric leaf, thinly sliced  
3 kaffir lime leaves, thinly sliced  
30 palm (nipah) leaves, cut into 22-cm lengths

**Coconut mixture (blended):**

2 tablespoons roasted, grated coconut, finely ground  
3 tablespoons grated, peeled coconut, finely ground  
3 tablespoons coconut cream, extracted, using muslin cloth, from 125 g grated semi-mature coconut

**Finely ground paste:**

8 dried chilies, soaked in water and drained  
1 red chili  
9 shallots, peeled  
2 cloves garlic, peeled  
4 candlenuts  
1 cm (½ inch) fresh turmeric, peeled  
1 cm (½ inch) galangal, peeled  
1 stalk lemon grass, sliced (use only the bottom white tender part)  
1 teaspoon crushed dried shrimp paste, roasted

**Method:**

Put aside 3 tablespoons of fish paste for later use. With wet hands, divide the remaining fish paste into 10 equal portions. Flatten each portion into a 7.5-cm (3-inch) square. Place on a greased tray. Combine the coconut mixture, finely ground paste, reserved 3 tablespoons of fish paste, salt, sugar, seasoning powder, turmeric and lime leaves. Divide into 10 equal portions. Join 3 pieces of palm leaves together by overlapping them slightly. Spread half of one portion of coconut mixture on it. Place a square of fish paste on it. Spread remaining half portion of coconut mixture to cover the fish square. Fold the leaves over the fish mixture and secure both ends with toothpicks.

Repeat the process for each fish paste portion. Cook the wrapped fish paste on a charcoal or electric grill for about 10-15 minutes or until the fish paste is cooked.

**Note:** Use galangal that is not too young or too mature. Very young galangal does not have the right flavor and a very mature one is too fibrous. You can use banana leaves instead of palm (nipah) leaves. Cut the leaves into 20-cm (8-inch) squares, scald the pieces and wipe dry before use. Grill for 10 minutes if you use banana leaves to wrap the fish mixture.

**\*Fish paste for otak-otak:**

1½ teaspoon salt  
180 ml iced water  
600 g (1 lb) Spanish mackerel fillet  
½ teaspoon ground white pepper  
4 teaspoons tapioca flour or cornflour (cornstarch)  
pinch of seasoning powder

**Method:** Dissolve salt in iced water. Pound fish fillet in a pestle and mortar or blend it in an electric food processor. Add salted, iced water slowly until it becomes a smooth paste. Add the

pepper and tapioca flour or cornflour (cornstarch) and seasoning powder and stir the paste in one direction, using a metal spoon and continue as the recipe requires.

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