Crispy-base sticky rice dumplings

Bánh ít ram



serves 2

about 60 min

mild

First ate these in Huế, from a lady's cart by the river

Shopping list

- [ ] 100 g pork belly, skin off, cut in 5 mm dice
- [ ] 100 g raw shrimp, peeled, deveined, cut in 5 mm dice
- [ ] 2 shallots, finely minced
- [ ] 1 tbsp oil
- [ ] 2 tsp fish sauce
- [ ] ¼ tsp black pepper, ground
- [ ] 2 tbsp dried shrimp, soaked 10 min, pounded fine
- [ ] 200 g glutinous rice flour
- [ ] ½ tsp salt
- [ ] 170 ml warm water, about 60°C
- [ ] 2 pandan leaves, cut to fit the steamer
- [ ] 500 ml oil, for deep-frying
- [ ] 2 tbsp fish sauce, stirred with 1 tbsp sugar, 1 tbsp lime juice, 3 tbsp water
- [ ] 1 garlic clove and 1 red chilli, finely minced

Method

1. Fry the shallots in the oil over medium heat for 1 min until golden. Add pork, shrimp, fish sauce and pepper and stir-fry 5 min until the shrimp are pink and the pan is dry. In a dry pan, toast the dried shrimp on low heat for 3 min until fluffy and orange.



Method, continued

2. Mix flour and salt, add the warm water bit by bit, and knead 5 min until smooth and soft but not sticky. Cover, rest 15 min, then split in half.



3. Make 10 balls from one half. Press each into a cup, add 1 tsp filling, and seal into a ball. Steam on oiled pandan leaves over high heat for 10 to 12 min, until the skin is translucent.



4. Shape the other half into 10 discs, 5 cm wide and 3 mm thick. Deep-fry at 170°C for 4 to 5 min, turning, until golden, puffed and crisp. Drain on a rack.



5. Set a warm dumpling on each crisp disc, press gently so they stick, and sprinkle with shrimp floss.



6. Stir the garlic and chilli into the sauce. Serve at once, spooning sauce over each piece.



Kimmi's tips

The sticky kind only

Glutinous rice flour only. Plain rice flour won't give the chewy, stretchy skin.

Chalky white to clear

The sign they're steamed through: the white skin turns translucent.

Why serve at once

Serve at once: the warm dumpling slowly softens the crisp disc.