Hue baby clam rice with herbs and broth

Cơm hến



serves 2

about 35 min

mild

Ate it first on a tiny stool by the river in Hue

Shopping list

- [ ] 600 g live baby clams, purged in salted water and rinsed
- [ ] 500 ml water
- [ ] 60 g pork fatback, cut into 1 cm cubes
- [ ] 40 g raw shelled peanuts
- [ ] 2 tbsp annatto oil
- [ ] 2 shallots, finely chopped
- [ ] 1 tbsp lemongrass, pale lower part only, finely chopped
- [ ] 1 tsp fish sauce, ½ tsp sugar, ½ tsp black pepper
- [ ] 1 tbsp Hue fermented shrimp paste, stirred into 2 tbsp warm water
- [ ] 1 tsp chili powder
- [ ] 60 g banana blossom, shaved paper-thin and soaked in cold water
- [ ] 1 small sour starfruit, thinly sliced
- [ ] 15 g Vietnamese mint and perilla leaves, torn
- [ ] 300 g cooked rice, made the day before, at room temperature

Method

1. Bring the clams and water to a boil over high heat and stir for 3–4 minutes, until the shells open and the meat floats. Lift out the meat, rinse it, and strain the broth.



Method, continued

2. Cook the pork fat in a dry pan over medium heat for 8–10 minutes, until golden and crisp. Remove it. Roast the peanuts in the same fat over low heat for 5 minutes, until golden and crackling. Crush them lightly.



3. Heat the annatto oil over medium heat. Fry the shallots and lemongrass for 1 minute, until fragrant. Add the clam meat, fish sauce, sugar and pepper, then stir-fry over high heat for 2 minutes, until firm and dry.



4. Pour the clear liquid off the shrimp paste, leaving the grit behind. Simmer it with the chili powder and 2 tbsp broth for 1 minute, until thick, red and fragrant.



5. Boil the broth for 2 minutes with 1 tsp of the shrimp sauce, until clear and steaming.



6. Put the cold rice in two bowls. Top with the banana blossom, starfruit, herbs, clams, peanuts, cracklings and a spoon of the sauce. Serve the hot broth on the side to pour over and mix.



Kimmi's tips

Keep the blossom pale

Banana blossom goes straight into cold water once shaved: it stays pale and crisp. None at the market? More starfruit and herbs.

Same fat, low heat

Peanuts roast in the pork fat the cracklings left, on low heat, 5 min. Golden and crackling, then crush them lightly.

Why the rice stays cold

Cold day-old rice, steaming broth on the side: the grains stay apart and the herbs stay fresh. Pour it over at the table, then mix.