



Bicentennial

From Singapore to Singaporean



ITEK SIO

By Chef Violet Oon



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Itek Sio is a Peranakan dish of tender braised duck simmered in a gravy of tamarind, dark soya sauce and coriander. The Peranakans are people with Chinese and Malay or Indonesian heritage. It is thought that they came to be in the early 1400s, when Chinese immigrant traders married local Malay women or the Batak from Sumatra. Itek Sio is usually enjoyed during tok panjang, a feast prepared for both joyous and solemn occasions including Chinese New Year, birthdays and death anniversaries.

Prep: 1 hr Cook: 2.5 hr Serves 6 to 8 persons

INGREDIENTS

1 duck, cleaned and cut into half, lengthwise

80g tamarind (assam), mixed with 3 cups water and strained

300g shallots, pounded roughly

20g coriander seeds, toasted until fragrant and ground into a powder

100g sugar

2 tbsp dark soya sauce

2 tbsp rice vinegar

1-2 tsp salt

2 tsp white pepper powder

Oil, for deep frying

Lettuce, for garnish

Cucumber, sliced, for garnish

Red chilli, sliced in thin strips, for garnish

Coriander, for garnish

METHOD

1. Combine the tamarind mixture, shallots, coriander powder, sugar, dark soya sauce, rice vinegar, salt and white pepper powder. Mix the marinade well, until it is smooth in consistency.
2. Place duck and marinade in a pot. If possible, use a weight to press the duck down.
3. Refrigerate and allow duck to marinate overnight. Occasionally, turn the duck over to ensure the other side is submerged into the marinade.
4. The next day, remove the weight, then boil the duck on a low heat in the marinade for 2 to 2.5 hours, turning over once.
5. Remove the duck from the pot, and allow it to drain.
6. Simmer the gravy until it becomes a thick sauce. Set aside.
7. When the duck is well drained, fry it in oil until golden brown and then chop it into serving pieces.
8. To serve, line a dish with lettuce, then place duck pieces on top, and pour thickened sauce over.
9. To garnish, top the duck with cucumber, red chilli and coriander.

