



Laksa linguini

NIBBLEDISH CONTRIBUTOR

Ingredients

1 cup laksa leaves (about one large-ish bunch), picked over
1 bulb garlic, peeled
2 red chillis
1/2 tbsp belachan
sunflower or olive oil (optional)

linguini
2 small cakes *tau kwa*
handful cashew nuts (optional)

Serves 2.

Instructions

This recipe is a fusion dish of sorts inspired by both pesto and anchoiade. It keeps the garlic and replaces basil with laksa leaves (AKA Vietnamese mint) and anchovies with belachan.

I thought it'd be less fussy to eat as a main meal with pasta rather than as a dip with bread and crudites. Linguini and *tau kwa* (firm tofu cake) provide echoes of the Singaporean dish *laksa lemak*, normally served with *chor beehoon* (thick rice vermicelli) and *tau pok* (deep fried tofu puffs).

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1. Combine the laksa leaves, peeled garlic and chillis in a food processor and pulse till very fine. If necessary, add oil to help it combine.
 2. Toast the *belachan* in a pan until almost charred and crumble into laksa mixture.
 3. In the mean time, cook the linguini until al dente.
 4. Also, sear *tau kwa* pieces on all sides in a non-stick pan.
 5. (optional) Toast cashew nuts in the same pan and chop roughly.
 6. When pasta is ready, toss in the laksa paste. Stir till fully combined.
 7. Pour pasta over seared tau kwa pieces and sprinkle on chopped cashew nuts, if using.

Serves 2

Notes:

For more heat, I use two chilli padi and one normal large chilli. I use red ones here for the sweetness that green ones just don't have. However, if you prefer a greener pesto, just use all green chillis.

The pesto can keep in a tupperware for a few days in the fridge. Just cover with a little oil to stop it from drying out. The flavour mellows quite a lot, so you decide which way you like it. I prefer it freshly made, it tastes greener this way.