

## A TRUE TASTE OF ASIA

BY TOMMY MIAH



### Vietnamese lamb shanks with sweet potatoes

#### Ingredients:

2 tbsp groundnut oil  
4 lamb shanks, about 350g  
2 onions, halved and cut into half moons  
2 tbsp chopped fresh ginger  
3 garlic cloves, finely sliced  
2 red chillies, both deseeded, one chopped and one thinly sliced  
1 tbsp sugar, plus 1 tsp  
2 lemongrass stalks, tough outer leaves removed, then bruised  
1.2 litre lamb stock  
1½ tbsp tomato purée  
4 sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into big chunks  
2 tbsp fish sauce  
Juice from 2 limes  
Big handful of mint leaves  
Handful of basil leaves

#### Method:

Heat oven to 160C/140C fan/gas 3. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a heavy bottomed casserole dish, season the shanks and brown them two at a time on all sides, adding the remaining oil for the second batch.

Remove the lamb and add the onions. Fry them quite briskly, about 30 seconds, add ginger, garlic and chopped chilli, then turn the heat down and cook for 1 minute. Add 1 tablespoon sugar, stir and then add the star anise, lemongrass, stock, purée and seasoning. Bring to the boil. Cover and cook in the oven for 1½ hours, then add the sweet potatoes and cook for 1 hour more. The lamb should be completely tender and almost falling off the bones. Stir in the fish sauce, lime juice and 1 tsp sugar to just lift the flavour; then scatter with the mint, the basil and the sliced chilli to serve.

### Vietnamese caramel trout

#### Ingredients:

50g golden caster sugar  
1 tbsp Thai fish sauce



1 red chilli, finely sliced  
Large piece of ginger, finely sliced  
2 rainbow trout fillets or bhetki fish  
2 heads bok choy, halved  
Juice from ½ lemon  
Coriander sprigs  
Steamed rice, to serve

#### Method:

Put the sugar in a large shallow pan, along with a small splash of water. Heat gently, swirling the pan, until the sugar has dissolved. Increase the heat and bubble the syrup until

it turns a dark amber colour. Add the fish sauce, most of the chilli and ginger, then splash in 1 tbsp water to dilute. Boil again until syrupy; then add the fish fillets, skin-side down, and the bok choy, cut-side down.

Cover the pan with a lid and simmer for 4-5 minutes until the fish is cooked and the bok choy has wilted. Turn off the heat, squeeze over the lemon and scatter with the remaining chilli, ginger and coriander sprigs. Serve with rice.

### Vietnamese chicken baguettes

#### Ingredients:

1 small chicken breast  
1 tsp olive oil  
1 tsp rice vinegar  
½ tsp golden caster sugar  
Juice from ½ lime  
½ small carrot, peeled and grated  
2 spring onions, thinly sliced  
2½ cm piece cucumber, deseeded and sliced  
½ red chilli, thinly sliced into rounds  
1 sandwich baguette

3-4 lettuce leaves, washed  
1-2 tbsp sweet chilli sauce

#### Method:

Put the chicken breast between 2 pieces of cling film and bash with a rolling pin to about 1cm thick. Heat a griddle pan until hot. Rub the chicken with the oil, cook for 2-3 minutes per side, or until cooked through. Set aside to cool.

Mix together the rice vinegar, sugar and lime juice, stirring until the sugar is dissolved. Add the carrot, spring onions, cucumber and chilli.

Split a sandwich baguette along the top. Stuff with the lettuce leaves and shred the chicken on top. Pile on the carrot mixture and wrap or place in a plastic box. Put the sweet chilli sauce in a small portable pot and when it's time for lunch, pour over the sauce just before tucking in.

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