



Halal Home Cooking



Malay dishes are a feast for the senses: they are colourful, rich and spicy — a result of using an abundance of ingredients, spices and herbs. This delightful collection of 72 authentic recipes from Malaysia's kampungs, including ulam vegetable rice, chicken kuzi, Rembau beef rendang and fried sepiang cake, will take you on a culinary journey and introduce you to well-loved dishes that have been enjoyed for generations.

Dato Chef Ismail Ahmad has travelled all over the world representing Malaysia at international culinary events and promoting its cuisine. He is a familiar face on cookery shows in Malaysia and Singapore, including *Aroma*, *Sri Murni*, *Yok Buat Kuih Raya!* and *Ala-ala Kampung*. He also co-owns Restoran Rebung Chef Ismail, an award-winning restaurant known for its authentic Malay dishes.

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Cuisine



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ISMAIL AHMAD



Recipes
from Malaysia's
Kampungs



For Review Only

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Home Cooking*

ISMAIL AHMAD

Recipes from Malaysia's Kampung

For Review Only

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My most enduring love to those closest to my heart:

- my grandmother, *Allahyarhamah* Hajah Hawa Binti Yusof and my mother *Allahyarhamah* Hajah Mariam Binti Jabil who introduced me to the traditional Malay cuisine.
- my grandfather, *Allahyarham* Haji Jabil who imparted his wisdom to me in buying the freshest ingredients in the Tampin market, Negeri Sembilan.
- my father Haji Ahmad bin Abu, my sisters Norlia and Noorsham, my brother Fadhil and Allahyarham Abd Razak who have been most generous in their advice and encouragement.

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Preface

This is where it all began. Like the taste of the forbidden fruit—my passion for the fresh produce of the orchards and the paddy fields, and my efforts in trying out the herbs and spices growing in such abundance around me—has led me to cook, cook and cook... Helping my grandmother in the kitchen has made me successful in the world of cookery. Not forgetting my grandfather though, who helped me by showing me the art of choosing the best from the sea when we were at the market.

I left my hometown in search of my dreams to become a graduate in Hotel Management and Catering with specialisation in Chef Training at the Mara University of Technology. Soon after, I joined a course with the Hilton International Kitchen Apprenticeship Programme for three years.

After getting my diploma, I worked in the food industry and became a lecturer at Taylor's College in Food Technology and Kitchen Management for two years. I was also the Chef in the industrial kitchen at KFC Holdings for seven years before becoming Executive Chef at Restoran Yasmin for a year.

Then I began a stint as a host for various cookery programmes for local television. I found a lot of satisfaction and excitement from hosting programmes like *Aroma*, *Sri Murni* and *Kuih Raya* on RTM TV1; *Hey Good Cooking*, *Wok and Roll* and *Makan Tapi Diet* on RTM TV2; *Riang Ria Bersama Cornflakes* and *Jom Masak Bersama Sri Murni* on TV3 and *Ala-Ala Kampung* on Channel 4 Astro. I also had the opportunity to host *Yok Buat Kuih Raya!* on Suria Channel, TV12, MediaCorp in Singapore.

In addition, I also joined Matrade on its tour to the United States of America, the Middle East and Europe to promote Malaysian food and products. My involvement with the Ministry of Agriculture lies in the promotion of Malaysian fruits and food in Amsterdam. I also cooked Asian food at the Lady Jessy in Cannes, South of France for two years, as well as for theatre artists at the Watermill Art Centre in South Hampton, New York for two years. With Tourism Malaysia, I travelled to Japan, South Africa, Cambodia and United Kingdom, conducting cooking demonstrations to promote Malaysian cuisine. Besides this, I am also involved in food styling and recipe creation. I act as a consultant to numerous new restaurants in the city, as well as a spokesman for a few food manufacturing companies.

My journey in life and the experiences that I have gained so far has given me the confidence to open my own restaurant called Restoran Rebung Chef Ismail with my partner Dr Sheikh Muszaphar Shukor Al-Masri. The food served in this restaurant is a tribute to the wonderfully varied tastes in food that I inherited from our forefathers. I vouch for the food and its traditional origins and the comforting taste of kampung fare from past memories.

My intention of writing this book is to document and share my culinary experience in traditional Malay cuisine, an invaluable national treasure, with our future generations. I hope that all these traditional recipes will not disappear in time. The 72 recipes showcased in this book is simple to follow and will not disappoint you. I have great hopes that this book will assist readers in trying

out our traditional cuisine without fuss, and they in turn will teach their children and grandchildren so that they too may come to appreciate this national treasure of ours.

This book would not have come to fruition without the cooperation, assistance and encouragement from my partner Dr Sheikh Muszaphar and all our staff at Restoran Rebung, in particular, Normah, Azizah, Haji Ismail, Nor, Bam-Bam and Ajil. Of course, not forgetting

'Mummy' Chef Florence Tan who encouraged me tirelessly to complete the compilation of this book. To all these people and also my fans and viewers of my cookery programmes on television who have been waiting patiently for this book, I owe you my heartfelt thanks. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to convey my apologies for any shortcomings that may be found in this book.

Ismail Ahmad

About The Author



Dato Chef Ismail Ahmad graduated from Mara University of Technology in Hotel Management and Catering, specialising in Chef Training. He worked in the food and beverage industry for several years before becoming Executive Chef at Restoran Yasmin.

Today, Chef Ismail is a familiar face on cookery shows in Malaysia and Singapore, including *Aroma*, *Sri Murni*, *Yok Buat Kuih Raya!* and *Ala-ala Kampung*. Appointed Malaysian Food Ambassador by Tourism Malaysia, he represents his country at international culinary events and promotes its cuisine.

At the Hospitality Asia Platinum Awards 2005-2006, Chef Ismail was awarded Excellence in Hospitality Personality Chef of the Year and Excellence in Hospitality Personality Malay Cuisine Chef. His restaurant, Restoran Rebung Chef Ismail, was awarded the Award for Excellence, Best Asian Cuisine Restaurant in the same year. It has also been nominated several times for Best Malay Restaurant at the Time Out KL Food & Drink Awards.

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COCONUT MILK RICE NORTHERN STYLE NASI LEMAK UTARA

INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg rice, washed and drained
- 200 ml coconut cream, extracted from 1 grated skinned coconut
- 1.3 litre water
- 4-cm knob ginger, peeled and sliced
- 2 stalks lemon grass, bruised
- 1 screwpine (pandan) leaf, knotted
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled and sliced
- 5 shallots, peeled and sliced
- 1 Tbsp fenugreek seeds
- 1 Tbsp black peppercorns
- 1/2 tsp salt

METHOD

Place rice, coconut cream, water, ginger, lemon grass, screwpine leaf, garlic, shallots, fenugreek seeds, black pepper and salt in an electric rice cooker. Stir well.

Switch on the rice cooker and cook until rice is done.

Fluff the rice before serving.

NOTE

This rice may be served with the following accompaniments: boiled egg, fried peanuts (groundnuts), fried dried anchovies, prawn sambal, squid sambal and fried water convolvulus (*kangkung*).



GRILLED AUBERGINE SALAD LAWAR TERUNG

INGREDIENTS

- 2 aubergines (eggplants/brinjals), long variety
- 1 onion, peeled and sliced
- 5 bird's eye chillies (*cili padi*), sliced
- 250 ml coconut cream, extracted from 1 grated coconut
- 1/2 tsp kalamansi juice
- Salt to taste

FINELY GROUND

- 3 red chillies
- 3 tsp dried prawns (shrimps), soaked and drained
- 3 dried chillies, soaked to soften
- 1 tsp black peppercorns

METHOD

Grill aubergines on a charcoal grill until done. Peel and cut into 2-cm lengths. Set aside to cool.

Mix ground ingredients in a bowl until well-combined. Add onion and bird's eye chillies, coconut cream, kalamansi juice and salt. Stir well.

Add grilled aubergines and toss until well-coated. Serve immediately.

NOTE

If desired, you can substitute aubergines with: banana bud (*jantung pisang*) that has been blanched until tender, or finely sliced boiled beef grilled in the oven at 160°C for 10 minutes, or peeled young horse mangoes (*bacang*) that has been finely shredded, or sliced cucumber.



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GRILLED HERRING

TERUBUK BAKAR

INGREDIENTS

- 1 herring (*ikan terubuk*), about 1 kg
- 250 ml coconut cream, extracted from 1 grated coconut
- 8 shallots, peeled and ground
- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and ground
- Salt to taste
- 2 banana leaves, each measuring 30 x 30 cm
- 1 stalk lemon grass, thinly sliced

METHOD

- Wash the fish (without removing the scales) with salt water and drain.
- Combine coconut cream with shallots and garlic and season with a little salt.
- Line the grill or wire mesh with banana leaves. Preheat oven to 160°C.
- Place fish on banana leaves and spread the coconut milk mixture evenly on the fish. Sprinkle sliced lemon grass over the fish.
- Bake for 30 minutes with the oven door slightly ajar to avoid smoke and damage to the oven.
- Serve with Tamarind Dip with Ground Chillies (see recipe below).

TAMARIND DIP WITH GROUND CHILLIES

AIR ASAM BERCILI KISAR

INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 stalk torch ginger bud (*bunga kantan*), thinly sliced
- 4 sprigs polygonum leaves (*daun kesum*), finely sliced
- 2 tomatoes, finely sliced

FINELY GROUND

- 3 red chillies
- 6 bird's eye chillies (*cili padi*)
- 1 Tbsp dried shrimp paste (*belacan*) powder

SEASONING

- 250 g tamarind pulp, mixed with 250 ml water, squeezed and juice strained
- Sugar and salt to taste

METHOD

- Mix all the ingredients until well-combined and serve with grilled fish.

FISH SAUCE AND ULAM LEAVES DIP PAHANG STYLE

BUDU PAHANG

INGREDIENTS

- 60 ml cooking oil
- 250 ml Kelantanese fish sauce (*budu*)
- 600 ml coconut milk, extracted from 1 grated coconut and 600 ml water

THINLY SLICED

- 15 bird's eye chillies (*cili padi*)
- 5 red chillies
- 10 bilimbi fruits (*belimbing buluh*)
- 10 shallots, peeled
- 5 cloves garlic, peeled
- 5-cm knob ginger, peeled
- 4 stalks lemon grass

ULAM LEAVES (FINELY SLICED)

- 2 turmeric leaves
- 2 pointed pepper leaves (*daun kaduk*)
- 4 sprigs polygonum leaves (*daun kesum*)

METHOD

- Heat cooking oil in a pan over medium heat and fry sliced ingredients until soft.
- Add the Kelantanese fish sauce and coconut milk. Stir until well-combined and bring to the boil.
- Add *ulam* leaves and continue to stir until dry.
- Serve with grilled fish.



Clockwise from top: Grilled Herring, Tamarind Dip with Ground Chillies; Fish Sauce and Ulam Leaves Dip Pahang Style.

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From top: The Five Aunts' Beef Curry; Thai Style Salad.



From top: Muscovy Duck Kuzi; Thai Style Chicken.