

Mohinga (Burmese Rice Noodle Soup)

<http://wp.me/pWGRR-116>



Serves four

Catfish is traditionally used for this dish, but any freshwater white fish should be fine. If you're getting them from a fish market, be sure to ask them to keep the heads on, as we're going to use them to make a flavorful fish stock and soup base. Also, separate the heads from the rest of the fish before starting this recipe so that when you pull the fish bodies out of the pot later you don't have to look at or deal with the heads.

In a stockpot, warm the coconut oil on med heat for a minute or two, then add the shallot and sauté until softened and aromatic, about three minutes. Add the shrimp paste, galangal, and ginger, and sauté another three minutes, until the paste starts to smell slightly toasted.

Add the fish to the pot and enough water to completely cover the fish, about 10 cups. Simmer, adjusting the heat as needed to prevent it from turning into a rolling boil, until the fish is cooked through, about 10 minutes. You'll know the fish is cooked when it starts to flake slightly. Once the fish is cooked, remove it from the pot and set it aside to cool. Continue to simmer the heads in the pot as the fish cools.

With clean hands, gently remove the meat from the fish, discarding the skin. Set the fish meat in the fridge for a while to cool in anticipation of making some fritters to accompany your soup. Return the fish carcasses to the pot (minus the skins) and add the lemongrass. Simmer for another hour.

During this hour, prep and cook your fritters, and if you haven't made your hard-boiled eggs, might as well make them now. Similarly, prepare your rice vermicelli by dipping them in boiling water for three minutes, then drain them and rinse with cold water, and set aside.

Also, you may want to check your tamarind paste for chunks, as many brands are machine-processed and have chunks of shell in them, which is not very fun to find in a soup. Take the 1/2 tbsp of paste and mix it with some hot water until it's dissolved, then strain it and discard

soup base:

1 tbsp coconut oil
1 shallot, chopped
1 tsp shrimp paste
1" each galangal and ginger
10 cups water
2 whole catfish or other white-meat freshwater fish (~1 lb each), heads separated
1 stalk lemongrass, chopped into 2" lengths
1/2 tbsp each fish sauce and tamarind paste, more to taste
1 tsp salt, more to taste

accompaniments:

8oz rice vermicelli
4 hard-boiled eggs, sliced in half length-wise
fish and rice fritters
1 handful cilantro, finely chopped
1 lime

any shells you find.

After an hour, strain your broth through a fine sieve or colander and discard the solids. Return the pot of broth to the stove and continue to simmer, and add the fish sauce, tamarind paste, and salt. Add more of each to taste. Cut your lime in half, squeeze the juice out of one half, and slice the other half into wedges to serve with.

Once you're happy with the taste of the broth, it's time to put everything together. Add some vermicelli to each bowl, then pour in the broth. Add the cilantro and eggs, and serve with the rice fritters and lime wedges.