

Stir-Fried Spicy Beef

This is a robust, simple street-food recipe from Thailand, quite unlike the refined and sophisticated cuisine we associate with this country. It is hot, sweet-salty and aromatic — excellent comfort food for a cold day. The only accompaniment it requires is a bowl of rice.

Note: Fish sauce and chilli jam are increasingly available commercially from good food stores

Ingredients

- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp coriander seeds
- 4 tbsp fish sauce
- 200g rump steak, sliced into 2" x 1" strips
- 3 tbsp chilli jam
- 5 tbsp deep-fried shallots
- 1 tsp chilli powder
- 1 tbsp chopped coriander leaves

Toast the cumin and coriander seeds lightly in a dry pan, and grind them quite finely. Add a pinch of salt, mix with the fish sauce, and marinade the beef strips in the mixture for about four hours, turning occasionally. Meanwhile, prepare the shallots. Cut lengthwise into thin slices. Heat some oil in a wok until quite hot, and then add shallots. Stir-fry, keeping the oil hot, and stirring the shallots continuously, until they start to turn colour and smell nutty. Strain quickly from the oil, and dry on some kitchen paper.

When the beef is sufficiently marinated, add some new oil to the wok (about 2 tbsp), and stir-fry for about 3 minutes, a bit longer if you like it well done. Reduce the heat, and add the fried shallots, the chilli jam, the chilli powder, a further 1 tbsp fish sauce, and a little water if needed. Warm through and serve dressed with the chopped coriander leaves.

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