

Pickled Fish

a South African tradition

Serves 6 – 8

Ingredients

2 kg firm fish
Salt and pepper
Oil for baking/frying
3 cups vinegar
1 cup water
25ml turmeric
15ml curry powder + extra for dusting
25ml black pepper corns
25ml crushed, fresh ginger
4 large onions, finely sliced
6 lemon leaves
2 bay leaves
1 cup sultanas
40ml cake flour

What to do

1. Cut the fish into portions, season and dust with flour and a little of the curry powder.
2. Bake in a moderate oven for about 20 minutes or until cooked; turn half way through.
3. In a large, stainless steel, ceramic or enamel pot combine the vinegar, water, sugar, turmeric, curry powder, salt and pepper corns. Bring to a boil.
4. Add the onions, lemon and bay leaves. Simmer for about 10 minutes. Be careful not to overcook the onions – keep them crunchy.
5. Place the flour into a small bowl or jug and gradually add a little of the sauce to make a smooth paste. Add this to the sauce and stir over a high heat until it thickens.
6. Add the sultanas.
7. Starting with the onions layer them with the fish in a glass dish (do not use plastic or metal). Pour over the sauce. Cover and allow to cool before putting it into the fridge.
8. Allow to stand for at least three days before eating. Keeps for up to three months.
9. Serve at room temperature with brown bread and butter.

Notes

- Traditionally, pickled fish is made with kabeljou, cape salmon, yellow tail or snoek. I now make it with hake; I used to make it with angel fish.
- Some folk deep fry their fish rather than baking it.
- The amount of curry powder depends on two things: the strength of your choice of masala and personal taste.
- In the Western Cape of South Africa, pickled fish is traditionally eaten on Good Friday and with hot cross buns.

