



Cod with Malaysian chili sauce at Spice Market



JEAN-GEORGES VONGERICHTEN

Back in August 2003, I began working on Spice Market and took my chefs on an 18-day, 10-city, eight-country tour of India and Asia. We visited such exotic cities as Hong Kong, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Saigon and Jakarta, to name a few. Throughout this trip, the team and I ate mostly street food, tasting different dishes and unlocking the complex flavors.

Many discoveries were made during this culinary tour, one of which was Guilin chili sauce. Its texture, flavor and aromas all captured the essence of the street, which was exactly what I was looking for. Guilin cuisine is known for its snacks and the use of spices, especially chili. The famous Guilin chili sauce is made of fresh chili, garlic and fermented soybeans, and is considered one of the Chinese city's three treasures (the other two are liquor distilled from rice and pickled tofu).

This sauce ended up inspiring the classic Spice Market dish: cod with Malaysian chili sauce and Thai basil. plexities of Southeast Asian cooking.

This dish is now a staple at both Spice Markets, here in Atlanta as well as in New York. I hope you enjoy discovering the flavors as much as we did! **SP**

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EASTERN TREASURES

COD WITH MALAYSIAN CHILI SAUCE Serves 4

INGREDIENTS:

¼ cup plus 1 tablespoon grape seed, corn or other neutral oil
5 garlic cloves, minced
2 ½ tablespoons minced ginger
2 ½ tablespoons Guilin chili sauce
1 ½ tablespoons light soy sauce
2 teaspoons rice vinegar
2 ½ tablespoons Shao Xing wine
1 ½ tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
5 scallions, trimmed and sliced, green and white parts separated
4 6-ounce cod filets, 1 ½-inches thick
¼ teaspoon white pepper, plus more to taste
4 celery stalks, trimmed and diced, 4 leaves reserved for garnish
Thai basil oil

INSTRUCTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Heat half the oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the garlic and ginger and cook, stirring, until golden, about 5 minutes. Add the chili sauce, soy sauce, vinegar, wine, sugar, salt and scallion whites, and turn the heat to low. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is thick like jam, about 10 minutes. Add the scallion greens, and simmer just until cooked though, about 2 minutes. Remove from the heat, and set aside.

Put the remaining oil in a large, nonstick, ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Season the cod fillet with salt and white pepper, and then add to the skillet. Cook for 30 seconds, and then transfer the fish to the oven. Cook until a knife passes easily through the fish, about 8 minutes. Meanwhile, put the celery in a small saucepan, and add just enough water to coat the bottom of the pan. Set over medium-high heat and cook until bright green and warmed through, about 4 minutes. Drain.

If the sauce has cooled, reheat it gently over medium-low heat. Season to taste with salt, and then spoon 2 tablespoons of sauce onto each serving plate. Put the fish fillets on top of the sauce and the celery on top of the fish. Drizzle the basil oil around the plate, garnish with celery leaves, and serve.

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KEY INGREDIENTS

