

Tangy seafood stew

Ingredients

- 1 tbsp vegetable oil or other neutral oil
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 6 cups water
- 1 tsp light or dark brown sugar, plus more as needed
- 1 tbsp pomegranate molasses, plus more as needed
- 1.5 tbsp fish sauce, plus more as needed
- 0.5 tsp fine sea salt
- 227 g fresh or frozen pineapple chunks, cut into bite-size chunks
- 283 g mild-tasting, firm fish fillet, cut into 3.5cm/1.5in chunks
- 8 extra-large or 12 large prawns, with or without shells, deveined
- 227 g small clams or cockles
- 1 large celery stalks, cut on a sharp diagonal into 1cm/0.5in-wide pieces
- 1 large unripe tomato, cut into wedges
- 2 cups beansprouts
- 0.3 cups roughly chopped fresh herbs such as coriander (cilantro), Thai basil and mint
- 0.2 heaped tsp of ground cumin
- 1 jalapeño chilli, thinly sliced

Instructions

1. In a large saucepan over medium-low heat, combine the vegetable oil and garlic, and cook at a gentle sizzle, stirring occasionally, for about 3 minutes, until the garlic is golden.
2. Pour in the water to arrest the cooking, then add the brown sugar, pomegranate molasses, fish sauce, salt and pineapple.
3. Turn the heat to high to bring to a fast simmer, adjust the heat to maintain that pace and cook for 8–10 minutes to develop flavour. If not serving right away, remove from the heat and cover. Return to a near boil before continuing.
4. Add the fish fillet, prawns and clams to the pan and cook for 3–4 minutes, just until the fish is opaque, the prawn curls and the clams open.
5. Add the celery and cook for about 2 minutes, until slightly softened. Add the tomato and beansprouts and cook for 1 minute more, until slightly softened, then turn off the heat.
6. Add the herbs, cumin and chilli to the pan and then let sit for 5 minutes.
7. Taste and, if needed, adjust the flavour with additional brown sugar, fish sauce or pomegranate molasses to arrive at a tart-sweet-savoury balance.
8. Using a two-handed approach with a ladle in one hand and chopsticks or tongs in the other, transfer the soup to a large bowl or divide among individual soup bowls. Serve immediately.