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E&O Iftar

MAY 2, 2018 | TRAILINGME | LEAVE A COMMENT



As the holy month of Ramadan descends on us, our Muslim friends will be preparing to fast (puasa) from dawn to dusk, while they also engage in more prayer and works of charity.

We in Malaysia are blessed to not only enjoy the public holidays for religious and cultural celebrations of our rich and diverse communities, but to also indulge in the food which are associated with each of the festivals.

One of the high points for me during Ramadan since I was a child was to look forward to the wide array of Malay 'kuih' (cakes and desserts) sold at the Ramadan bazaars.

In more recent times, Ramadan has also spelt a time for me to catch up with my Muslim friends over the 'Buka Puasa' (iftar) meal.



Here in Malaysia we are spoilt for choice and because most people are working and are unable to get home in time to prepare the evening meal to break fast, they either pack food to take home or sometimes indulge in buffet spreads found in restaurants and hotels.

The heritage Eastern and Oriental Hotel (E&O Hotel) in Penang hasn't failed to deliver yet again on a sumptuous 'buka puasa' feast this year.

The hotel's Sarkies Restaurant is featuring the usual suspects of popular traditional Malay fare for its 'Jamuan Barbuka Puasa' buffet, in addition to its intercontinental offerings of Japanese and Italian favourites.





“The perennial Malay salad or ‘ulam’ to be complemented with an array of ‘sambal’ and sauces, is the perfect starter to the sumptuous meal for breaking fast,” says the hotel’s communication and public relations manager Eileen Chong.





“Our traditional must-haves like ‘biryani rice’, ‘rendang daging’, ‘ayam masak madu’ and ‘gulai ketam kampung’ are prepared by our seasoned chefs who have tapped into their familiar family recipes, handed down through generations.”



For the hotel's international guests, the Ramadan buffet serves as a great introduction to Malaysia and her lip-smacking cuisines. For those who are fasting, what better way to break fast than to enjoy local staples like satay, ikan bakar (grilled fish), 'roti canal' and 'murtabak' and to round up the meal with the assortment of Malay 'kuih' and the heart-warming 'bubur kacang' (mung bean porridge with coconut milk). For the rest of us, the meal is one we can share with our Muslim friends as a sign of solidarity and a good opportunity to catch up and bond.















The buffet is available daily from 17 May to 14 June, 2018 from 7.30pm to 10.30pm and priced at RM166 (adults) and RM83 (children).

Early birds take note: bookings made and paid before 23 May 2018 are entitled to a five full paying adults allows one person to dine for free deal (+604-222-2000 extn 3151/3139 or email fbcentral.resv@eohotels.com)

For those wishing to try their hand in cooking at home, below are two recipes courtesy of the E&O Hotel's chefs ...



Chicken Biryani

5 to 6 Persons

Ingredients

- 1 onion, thinly sliced

150ml vegetable oil

2½ tbsp sweet Pepper

1 tbsp each black peppercorns, cumin seeds and coriander seeds

2½ tsp each ground turmeric and ground chilli

¼ tsp finely grated nutmeg

3 cardamom pods

2 cloves

2 star anise

1 cinnamon stick, broken into rough pieces

2 long dried chillies, broken
into rough pieces

1 fresh bay leaf

500g thick natural yogurt

½ cup each finely chopped mint and coriander, plus extra coriander
sprigs to serve

1½ tbsp finely grated ginger

4 garlic cloves, finely chopped

6 chicken leg portions, halved
through the joint into thigh and drumstick

400g basmati rice

50g butter, diced

70ml milk

¼ tsp saffron threads

To serve: Fried shallots and fresh coriander

Method

- Fry onion in 120ml oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until golden, 6-8 mins.

Transfer to a bowl and cool. Dry-roast spices, chilli and bay leaf over medium heat, then pound with a mortar and pestle to a fine powder.

Add to onion along with yogurt, herbs, ginger, garlic and 2 tsp sea salt and mix well.

Add chicken, stir to coat, cover and refrigerate overnight to marinate.

Spread chicken mixture in the base of a heavy-based casserole with a tight-fitting lid.

Bring rice, 20g butter, remaining oil and enough well-salted water to cover by 2cm to the boil in a saucepan over medium-high heat.

Drain and spread over chicken.

Bring milk, saffron and remaining butter to the simmer in a saucepan over medium-high heat, then pour over rice, cover with foil, then the lid.

Cook over low heat until rice is fluffy and chicken is cooked through (50 minutes-1 hour).

Stand for 15 mins without removing the lid, then serve hot, scattered with fried shallots and coriander sprigs.



Rendang Daging

Preparation time: 1 hour

5 to 6 Persones

Ingredients

1 kg beef Striploin, cut into 3cm chunks

For the beef Marination

2 tbsp coriander seeds (ketumbar)

2 tsp cumin seeds (jintan putih)

2 tsp fennel seeds (jintan manis)

1 tsp black peppercorns (lada hitam)

1 1/2 tsp salt (garam)

For the spice paste

200gr shallots (bawang kecil), peeled

10 garlic cloves (bawang putih), peeled

5 stalks lemongrass (batang serai), cut into segments

1" galangal root (lengkuas/galangal), peeled

1" old ginger (halia), peeled

½" turmeric root (kunyit hidup), peeled

Other ingredients

1 tbsp red chili powder (serbuk chili)

10 pcs kaffir lime leaves (daun limau purut), snipped with scissors

2 tbsp palm sugar (gula Melaka)

8 pcs cardamom (buah pelaga)

5 pcs cloves (bunga cengkih)

10cm cinnamon stick (kulit kayu manis)

For the coconut milk

1 coconut freshly grated – to yield 250ml thick coconut milk and 250ml thin coconut milk

For the kerisik

100g fresh grated coconut Squized

Salt, to taste

Method

1. Toast the dry spices (cumin, fennel, coriander seeds) in a wok over low heat until fragrant. Using a mortar (or grinder), grind the spices and peppercorn into powder. Marinade the beef with the spices and salt for 2 hours.
2. To make the kerisik, place the freshly grated coconut into a wok over medium heat and toast until it turns to a dark brown. Stir often, this will take about 10 minutes. Once browned, place the toasted Kerisik into a mortar pound oil released from the kerisik.
3. Place the spice paste ingredients into an electric blender with 3 tbsp of water and blend until you get a paste. (Note: The paste is a bright yellow colour)
4. Place all ingredients (marinated beef, coconut milk, kerisik, spice paste + other ingredients) into a large pot. Bring to the boil over medium high heat, and once boiling, reduce to low heat and simmer for 3 hours or until the rendang is dry and meat is tender and dry (Tock)
5. Season with more salt, as necessary, Remove and serve with rice or lemong.



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