

Meen Pollichathu - Bass Steamed In Banana Leaves

Steaming mini parcels of fish or meat wrapped in lotus, vine, or banana leaves is a very old cooking technique – the leaves subtly infuse the food with its delicate flavor. Malayalees usually steam a local favorite, pearl spot (*karimeen*), in banana leaves. Opening up these aromatic fish parcels is a sensory delight, as the heady smell of spices fills the air. Bass is substituted in this recipe, as pearl spot is available only in specialist shops. BASS STEAMED IN BANANA LEAVES makes for a light summer meal with a green salad, grilled vegetables, or COCONUT RICE.

Ingredients (To serve 4)

- Medium Bass - 1½ lb / 680 gm
- Shallots - 8
- Ginger - 1-inch / 2.5-cm piece
- Small green chilies - 5
- Tamarind concentrate - ½ tsp
- Olive oil - 3 tbsp
- Fenugreek seeds (*methi*) - ½ tsp
- Red chili powder - 1 tbsp
- Turmeric powder - ¼ tsp
- Curry leaves - 6
- Salt - ½ tsp
- Banana leaves - 2

Nutrition Information (per serving) %DV

Calories	301	15 %
Carbohydrates	10 gm	3 %
Protein	33 gm	66 %
Fat	14 gm	21 %
Cholesterol	70 mg	23 %
Sodium	436 mg	18 %
Fiber	2 gm	8 %
Calcium	41 mg	4 %
Iron	3 mg	17 %

Utensils

- Small pan
- Steamer

Preparation (10 minutes)

1. Clean (gut and scale) and wash the fish. Make large gashes on the sides of the fish.
2. Peel and mince the shallots.
3. Peel and mince the ginger.
4. Trim the stems off and mince the green chilies.
5. Dilute the tamarind concentrate with 1-2 tbsp warm water.
6. Prepare the steamer.

Cooking (30 minutes)

1. Heat the oil in the pan over high heat.
2. Add the shallots, ginger, and green chilies to the hot oil. Stir-fry for a minute.
3. Add the fenugreek seeds and stir-fry for 15 seconds.
4. Add the red chili and turmeric powders and the curry leaves. Stir-fry until the curry leaves become crisp.
5. Add the fish. Cook both sides for about a minute on each side. Remove the fish.
6. Add the tamarind liquid and ¼ cup water to the spice mixture in the pan. Let the marinade come to a boil and thicken.
7. Season with salt.
8. Coat the fish with the marinade. Keep aside for 20 minutes.
9. Prepare the steamer.
10. Wrap the fish loosely in banana leaves, and place it in the steamer.

11. Cook for about 8-10 minutes. Fish is cooked when it flakes easily.

Serve: Steam just before serving.

Note: Banana leaves are available in Asian supermarkets. If not available, use aluminum foil.

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