



MEEN VARATHADU

KERALA MASALA FISH FRY (WHOLE)

by Shella Grover

Hey friends, hope you are all doing great and your Easter passed without a hitch. The heavy rains should never succeed in mellowing down your spirits during the holidays! And even though the sun has peeked through quite often, it has not entirely been able to push the clouds away. In such weather, I personally feel that food is a big solace, because it has a very innate quality to lift your mood the moment you even see it and smell it - let alone taste it. In India rains bring with them kitchens smelling with warm and delicious smells of various kinds of

food, and I am sure the trend prevails worldwide.

Like any other festival season, Easter brought with it loads of good food on the table. I am sharing with you a very special recipe that is made in the kitchens of Southern India (Kerala) and is part of the festive lunch or dinner. It is something I grew up eating and during my youth it was my favourite finger (or rather, hand) food!! I guarantee its spicy goodness will leave you asking for more and more.

Ingredients :

- 1 kg – Indian mackerel or sardine

For the masala -

- 3-4 – onions (very finely chopped)
- 5-6 – big flakes garlic (grated)
- ½ inch – ginger (grated)
- 1 tsp – black pepper powder (optional if you wish to omit the heat)
- 1 tsp – paprika (for the colour)
- ½ tspn – turmeric powder
- 1 tspn – fish masala (easily available at all supermarkets and Indian stores)
- 10-12 – curry leaves (available at all green grocers)
- 1 – small lemon (juiced)
- 1 tbspn - cornflour
- 1 tbspn - salt
- Enough oil to shallow fry

Method :

1. Descale, gut and clean the fish very well. You can retain the heads and tails entirely as per your choice
2. Make diagonal slits on the fish 2 inches apart and set fishside
3. Mix all the ingredients of the masala together and cover the fish entirely with this masala, pushing some of it inside the slits
4. Keep it in the refrigerator for at least 15 minutes



5. Heat a good quality non-stick pan, pour in a little oil. When oil is hot, fry the fish for 3-4 minutes on each side.
6. While frying pat any left over masalas back onto the fish so all of it is used
7. Add oil as and when needed and you continue frying the fish
8. Garnish with sliced onions and lime juice

Shella Grover is a Food Consultant living in Dar es Salaam. She teaches cooking classes at her Culinary School, The Spice Safari. For more information email thespicesafari@gmail.com or contact Shella at 0767390696

