

Malaysian Laksa Soup | Wheat-Free

Swick

Serves 4 to 6 | Active Time: 1 hour | Total Time: 1 hour 15 minutes

Step 1: Making the Laksa Paste

- 10 to 12 dried red chilies, or to taste*
- 2 tsp coriander seeds
- 1/2 tsp fennel seeds
- 1/4 tsp cumin seeds
- 2"-inch fresh turmeric root (1 tbsp powder, or to taste/color)
- 1"-inch fresh galangal or ginger root
- 1 stalk fresh lemongrass, finely minced
- 3 to 4 cloves fresh garlic
- 1 small shallot (optional)
- 1/2 fresh lime juice (approx. 2 tsp)
- 1 tbsp Fish-Less Fish Sauce*
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper, or to taste
- 3 tbsp candlenuts, macadamia or cashew nuts
- 1/2 bunch fresh cilantro, with stems, roughly chopped

To make the laksa paste, first, soak the chilies. Note that if you do not have red chilies, you could use green instead, just know that this will dramatically affect the overall color. For more red color, a couple of long red chilies can be added as well. In terms of how many chilies to add, it really comes down to personal preference. The amount listed here produces a spicy, but not too spicy, soup.

Next, over medium heat, toast the coriander, fennel, and cumin seeds until fragrant. When done, transfer the seeds into a spice grinder or mortar and pestle and grind until somewhat fine.

At this point, place all of the remaining ingredients into a food processor, blender (or mortar and pestle if you are feeling brave), and blend until somewhat smooth. If you want a paste that is a bit more rustic, blend until you have a rough paste. Also note that the cilantro can be added at the end, and just pulsed a few times. This helps the sauce stay a more orange color.

Note: For this recipe, use either this Fish-Less Fish Sauce recipe, this recipe Fermented Black Bean 'Fish' Sauce, or use a combination of dark miso paste and dried bean curd (1 Tbsp of each).

Step 2: Cooking the Soup

- 1 pkg brown rice noodles (or rice noodles of choice)
- 1 can full-fat coconut milk (see note below)
- 2 to 4 cups stock
- 4 cups veggies of choice

Note: Place the coconut milk into the refrigerator overnight, so you can separate the fat from the liquid.

To reduce the amount of fat, try blending light coconut milk or even coconut water with some silken tofu to obtain the nice creamy texture that full-fat coconut milk would add. However, it's important to note that the flavor will not be quite as rich as if using full-fat coconut milk.

To cook the soup, heat a medium saucepan (or large wok) over medium to medium-high heat. Scoop a few tablespoons of the hard coconut fat from the can and add to the hot pan. Once the oil starts to release from the coconut milk, add laksa paste — start with 1/3 cup but you will likely need about a 1/2 cup (approximately half of the paste). Let this cook for 2 or 3 minutes.

Next, add the stock and remaining coconut milk. For the stock, we use this Faux Chicken Bouillon Powder. The amount of stock needed depends on how soupy or thick you want the final dish to be. Start with 2 and go from there.

Add whichever vegetables you have chosen to use — adding them from hardest to softest. Letting each one cook until then next ones are ready to be added so that they all end up being ready at the same time. Bring the soup to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low.

Next, add in the rice noodles and let the mixture simmer for 10 minutes to 15 minutes. Note, that if some of the vegetables will not take that long to cook, add those afterward. Also, note that harder vegetables might even benefit from being par-cooked beforehand.

To finish, taste for seasoning — adding a bit of salt, spice, and/or sweetener as desired.

Step 3: Serving the Soup

- bean sprouts (mung or regular)
- fresh cilantro, roughly chopped
- fresh mint, roughly chopped
- green onions, thinly sliced on the bias
- fresh long red chili pepper, thinly sliced on the bias
- lime wedges
- Thai basil (optional)

Garnish with fresh cilantro, mint, bean sprouts, or crisped tofu and serve immediately.