

Kare-Kare

Filipino oxtail stew in golden peanut sauce · Served with ginisang bagoong

PREP TIME

30 min

COOK TIME

3 – 4 hrs

SERVES

6 – 8

DIFFICULTY

Medium

ORIGIN

Pampanga

INGREDIENTS

THE PROTEIN

1.5 kg oxtail, cut into segments

500 g beef tripe *optional*

2 tsp salt, for boiling

1 whole head garlic, halved

1 onion, quartered

2 bay leaves

THE PEANUT SAUCE

1 cup unsalted peanuts, roasted & ground

½ cup smooth peanut butter *unsweetened*3 tbsp toasted ground rice *galapong*2 tbsp annatto seeds *atsuete*¼ cup annatto oil *see tip*

1 medium onion, sliced

6 cloves garlic, minced

to taste fish sauce *patis*

VEGETABLES

2 Japanese eggplant, sliced thick

200 g string beans, cut in 2-inch lengths

1 banana blossom, quartered *puso ng saging*

1 bunch bok choy or pechay

GINISANG BAGOONG (TO SERVE)

½ cup shrimp paste *bagoong alamang*50 g ground pork *optional*

3 cloves garlic, minced

METHOD

1 Blanch & boil the oxtail. Cover oxtail with cold water, bring to a boil for 5 minutes, drain and rinse. Return to pot with garlic, onion, bay leaves, and salt. Cover with fresh water and simmer until very tender, skimming foam.

- 3 – 3.5 HOURS (OR 45 MIN PRESSURE COOKER)

2 Make annatto oil. Heat ¼ cup neutral oil over low heat. Add annatto seeds and steep until oil turns deep orange. Strain and discard seeds. Reserve oil.

- 5 MINUTES

3 Sauté the aromatics. In a wide pot, heat annatto oil over medium. Sauté garlic until golden, then onion until soft. The oil will already be a deep gold-orange — this becomes the base color of your sauce.

- 5 MINUTES

4 Build the peanut sauce. Add ground peanuts and peanut butter to the pot, stirring to coat with the annatto oil. Ladle in 3–4 cups of the reserved oxtail broth, stirring constantly. Add the toasted ground rice and stir well — this thickens the sauce as it cooks.

- 10 MINUTES

1	small tomato, diced
1 tsp	sugar
1 tbsp	vinegar or calamansi juice

5 Add the oxtail & simmer. Add the cooked oxtail (and tripe if using) to the sauce. Simmer gently, adding more broth as needed to reach your preferred consistency. Season with fish sauce. The sauce should coat the back of a spoon thickly.

• 20 MINUTES

6 Cook the vegetables. Blanch banana blossom in salted water for 5 minutes, squeeze gently, and add to the pot. Add eggplant and string beans. Cook until just tender — vegetables should hold their color and texture. Add bok choy in the last 2 minutes.

• 8 - 10 MINUTES

7 Make ginisang bagoong. In a small pan, sauté garlic, then tomato, then ground pork if using. Add bagoong and stir-fry 2 minutes. Add sugar and vinegar. Cook until fragrant and slightly caramelized. Serve warm in a separate bowl.

• 8 MINUTES

! THE ESSENTIAL RULE

Kare-kare is never served without bagoong. The peanut sauce is intentionally mild — it was designed to need the salt, funk, and fermented depth that only shrimp paste provides. Place ginisang bagoong beside each bowl, not mixed in. Each person stirs in their own, one bite at a time.

ANNATTO OIL TIP

Don't skip steeping the annatto seeds. That deep golden-orange color is non-negotiable — it's the visual signature of the dish. Annatto powder works in a pinch but produces a flatter color.

TOASTED GROUND RICE

Toast raw rice in a dry pan until golden, then grind to a fine powder. This is the thickener that makes Filipino kare-kare distinct from every other peanut stew in the world. Don't substitute cornstarch.

SERVE WITH STEAMED RICE

Kare-kare is always eaten with plain steamed white rice. The rice absorbs the peanut sauce and balances the saltiness of the bagoong. This is not a dish to eat alone — it feeds a table.