

Monkfish Tikka

Machli Kay Tikka

Ingredients

Serves 4

400g monkfish fillet cut into 5cm cubes (tikka)

1/2(half) tsp ground turmeric

8 garlic cloves

5cm piece fresh root ginger

3/4(three quarters) tsp cumin seeds

3/4 tsp (three quarters) coriander seeds

1/2 (half) tsp garam masala

Juice of 1 small lime

3 tbsp groundnut oil

200g thick Greek-style natural yoghurt

1/2(half) tsp red chilli powder

Melted butter, for basting

Salt and white pepper

Tikka is one of the best known of all Indian dishes and is a northern speciality. The word ‘tikka’ simply means ‘cube’. Although it is usually prepared with chicken, try this version made with monkfish (or you could use any other firm-fleshed fish). If you can marinate it a day ahead, it’s all the more delicious!

Rub the salt, pepper and turmeric into the monkfish and set aside.

Use a blender to process together the garlic, ginger, spices, lime juice, oil and half the yoghurt to form a smooth paste (masala). Transfer to a large bowl and whisk in the remaining yoghurt. Check the seasoning, adding more chilli if desired.

Mix in the fish cubes, coating well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 4 hours and preferably overnight.

Now cook the tikka either on the barbecue or under a grill, basting well with the butter and turning the pieces until cooked through. (First thread onto skewers, if you like, to make turning easier.) If chargrilling, don’t place the fish directly onto the grill or it will stick. Instead, support the skewers so they are raised just above the grill. Cook, turning until tinged golden and tender. If cooking under the grill, place the fish on a grill rack, making sure it is not positioned too close to the heat or the heat is not too high.

Alternatively, if it is not an Indian summer, cook the fish in a preheated oven 220°C/Fan 200°C/Gas mark 7-8 for 8–10 minutes.

Cyrus’ Tips

A couple of teaspoons of tomato purée can be added to the masala (the spice paste) to give more colour and a thicker coating consistency.

If you are cooking this fish dish in your conventional oven, leave the skin on the fish fillets – it will protect the flesh whilst becoming nicely crisp.