

The Guardian



Baby back ribs in Chinese sticky sweet and sour sauce

Makes about 24 baby ribs

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Ingredients

2kg baby back ribs

For the cooking liquor

200ml soy sauce

100g sugar

2 tbs Chinese five spice

6 star anise

5 tsp dried chilli flakes (or to taste for hot-and-sour ribs)

2 onions, peeled and halved

2 thumbs fresh ginger, peeled and roughly chopped

For the marinade

100ml tomato ketchup

30ml sweet soy sauce

30ml rice vinegar

20g brown sugar

1 tsp dried chilli flakes (optional if you want it hot and sour)

Preparation

Place the rack of ribs in a large pan and cover with cold water. Add all the cooking liquor ingredients. Bring to the boil and skim off the froth. Simmer for 35-40 minutes, skimming as the froth or scum develops. Take the pan off the heat and allow the ribs to cool in the liquor.

Once cool, strain through a colander. Combine the marinade ingredients. Knock the cooking liquor ingredients off the ribs. Place the ribs in a bowl and coat thoroughly with the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for 3 hours, or preferably overnight.

Before barbecuing

Give the ribs enough time out of the fridge to lose their chill.

Barbecue

Pre-heat the barbecue grill to medium, or 'cook' temperature. Clean and lightly oil the rack. The ribs are already cooked, so you are caramelising the marinade, and heating

the meat through to the middle, while retaining the moisture. Grill the ribs for 10 minutes, basting with excess marinade, so they turn sticky.

To assemble the snack

Hold a rack of ribs upright, using a sharp heavy knife to cut between the ribs, leaving an even amount of meat each side. Pile in a bowl and serve immediately.

Tips

This is a messy one, so set up finger bowls with plenty of napkins.

Listen to ...

Dr Dre

The Chronic

Not ideal for a family gathering, admittedly, as Dre and his young protégé Snoop Doggy Dogg make free with references to some of their more colourful recreational activities on this 1992 classic. But Nineties gangsta rap remains unsurpassed in its cool evocation of hazy days in the blazing LA sunshine. And you only need to summon enough energy to bob your head.

Ally Carnwath

Topics

- Chinese food and drink