SNOEK PANNA COTTA

Serves 4 | Prep time: Start a day ahead | Cook time: About 1 hour



Snoek and apricot jam, the Cape Town pairing Eoin grew up with, turned into a fine-dining starter. Start it the day before.

RECIPE BY EOIN SHIELL, PRETORIA

INGREDIENTS:

PANNA COTTA

- [ ] 400g smoked snoek
- [ ] 45ml (3 tbsp) olive oil
- [ ] 3–4 sprigs thyme
- [ ] 500ml (2 cups) cream
- [ ] 125ml (½ cup) milk
- [ ] 60ml (¼ cup) sugar
- [ ] 30ml (2 tbsp) soy sauce
- [ ] Pinch of salt
- [ ] 5–6 black peppercorns
- [ ] 1 bay leaf
- [ ] 3 gelatine leaves

SESAME AND SOY SPONGE

- [ ] 120g cake flour, sifted
- [ ] 75g icing sugar
- [ ] 1 egg
- [ ] 5ml (1 tsp) baking powder
- [ ] 45ml (3 tbsp) dark soy sauce
- [ ] 120ml milk
- [ ] 15ml (1 tbsp) sesame oil
- [ ] 15ml (1 tbsp) melted butter
- [ ] Black food colouring (optional)

DRUNKEN PINEAPPLE

- [ ] ¼ pineapple
- [ ] 1 tot brandy, plus a splash to finish
- [ ] 60ml (4 tbsp) apricot jam
- [ ] Icing sugar, to taste
- [ ] 125ml (½ cup) water

TO GARNISH

- [ ] Toasted sesame seeds
- [ ] Matcha powder, for dusting
- [ ] Flat-leaf parsley or chives, chopped
- [ ] Edible flowers

METHOD:

01. **Braai the snoek (a day ahead):** place it on oiled foil, drizzle with the rest of the oil and add the thyme. Seal and braai for 8 minutes per side, then rest for 10 minutes.
02. Bone and shred the snoek. Set aside a third for garnish, dressed with a little olive oil, and refrigerate.
03. **Make the panna cotta:** soak the gelatine in cold water. Bring the cream, milk, sugar, soy sauce, salt, peppercorns, bay leaf and remaining snoek to the boil, simmer until the sugar dissolves, then steep off the heat for 7 minutes.
04. Squeeze out the gelatine and whisk it into the hot mixture. Strain, pressing the fish to extract the flavour. Pour into dariole moulds, cool, cover and refrigerate overnight.
05. **Make the sponge:** heat the oven to 180°C. Whisk the egg, icing sugar, butter and sesame oil until doubled, then whisk in the milk and soy sauce, followed by the flour, baking powder and colouring. Chill for 30 minutes.
06. Fill greased muffin tins two-thirds full and bake for about 20 minutes, until a skewer comes out clean. Cool on a rack.
07. **Make the pineapple:** cut the pineapple into cubes. Simmer the jam, brandy, water and icing sugar into a sauce, add the pineapple and simmer for 8–10 minutes. Cool, add a splash of brandy and chill for at least 2 hours.
08. **Plate up:** dust the plates with matcha. Dip each mould in hot water for a few seconds and turn out the panna cotta. Add torn sponge, sesame seeds, the reserved snoek mixed with herbs, the pineapple and a little syrup. Finish with edible flowers.