Asam Pedas Melaka (Melaka Asam Pedas)

Country: Malaysia

Date of registration: 31/03/2015

Main characteristics/features

Melaka Asam Pedas is a sauce-based dish that is a mix of sour and spicy flavours. Varieties of fish such as Sea catfish, Indian mackerel, Short mackerel and Long tail shad are the usual main ingredient of this dish, although chicken or beef may also be used. In Melaka’s rich cultural history, its port was once renowned as a stopping-off place for ships, particularly spice traders, which was one of the contributing factors to the creation of the recipe of Melaka Asam Pedas.

Geographical area

Melaka Asam Pedas is found throughout the state of Melaka, which comprises three districts and four local authorities.

Production/processing

The dish is prepared using dried chillies, shallots, garlic, ginger, shrimp paste, lemongrass and galangal. The ingredients are ground, pounded to a paste and then fried until a fragrant aroma is released and the paste starts to dry. Tamarind juice is then added to the ingredients. The fish or chicken is subsequently added and the mixture is brought to the boil, following which lemongrass, candlenut, tamarind or lime leaves are added. Melaka Asam Pedas is usually served with or without rice.

Link between product and territory

Asam Pedas is one of the signature dishes of the state of Melaka. Compared to versions of the dish from other states, Melaka Asam Pedas has a thicker sauce due to a more abundant use of spices such as cumin, black pepper, or fenugreek. The addition of Kerisik, or toasted grated coconut, also contributes to make the sauce thicker. Melaka Asam Pedas tends to have a stronger aroma due to the variety of ingredients used. Historical and cultural factors contribute to this factor, as in addition to the Malays, the Peranakan Chinese, Portuguese and Chettty communities have assimilated with the culture of the local population.