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REFLECTION ON NASI AMBANG

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NASI AMBANG

OVERVIEW

Nasi Ambang is a special dish of Javanese people served during the festivities. Served in a banana leaf-like setting. Made with steamed white rice, chicken curry, beef/chicken rendang, and sambal goreng, vegetable dishes, salted fish, and more.

It is a grand dish which is usually served during special occasions like Ramadan, weddings, kenduri (Muslim thanksgiving) and anniversaries.

This topic came about as I was thinking about Malaysian most popular lunch and dinner meal. It made me decided to do some researches of this most popular cuisine which is believed to have Javanese origin and how it has been assimilated over the decades to become a part of Malaysians.

INTRODUCTION



The Photo of "Nasi Ambang"

Nasi Ambeng (pronounced "um-bng") is a special rice dish, similar to Nasi Campur (mixed rice), which is popular among the Javanese. Nasi ambeng or Nasi ambang is a fragrant rice dish that consists of - but is not limited to steamed white rice, chicken curry or chicken stewed in soy sauce, beef or chicken rendang, sambal goreng fried sambal; a mildly spicy stir-fried stew commonly made with firm tofu, tempeh, and long beans urap, bergedel, and serunding. It is a popular Javanese cuisine, especially within the Javanese Malay communities in the Malaysian states of Selangor and Johor, Singapore as well as in Java, Indonesia.

INGREDIENTS

- ❖ Steamed white rice
- ❖ Chicken curry
- ❖ Beef/chicken rendang
- ❖ Sambal goreng
- ❖ Vegetable dishes
- ❖ Salted fish &
- ❖ More

MY EXPERIENCES



I'm at AEON Taman University with "Nasi Ambang"

I'm along with my group mates were visited Aeon restaurants to taste this delicious meal, Nasi Ambeng. SOME call it an extravagant Javanese dish while others regard it as a stylish "togetherness rice". It

is a grand dish which is usually served during special occasions like Ramadan, weddings, kenduri (Muslim thanksgiving) and anniversaries. The main portion of the dish is steamed rice while the side dishes could be anything from fried tempe; fried tofu; serunding kelapa; ayam kicap; fried long beans; vermicelli noodles and tofu; and fried brinjals with dried prawns among other things. More often, the bitter malinjo or empeng crackers and a kind of mango sambal will accompany this rice. A generous amount of rice is placed in the center of a dulang or large platter which is lined with banana leaf. This serving is normally shared by a group of four to eight people. Leftovers are packed and taken home. Nasi Ambeng is normally eaten by hand and the standard practice is to sit around the platter on a mat. And that's why it is called a communal dish. Other variations of the dish. Nowadays, the portions vary with other interesting side dishes. They even have takeaway Nasi Ambeng which is packed like nasi lemak bungkus except the packets are much larger. According to celebrity chef Datuk Redzuawan Ismail, who judged the Nasi Ambeng competition organized by Selangor Cultural Carnival recently, the specialty of Nasi Ambeng's gravy lies in the spices which should be pounded or grinded the old-fashioned way. "That's the crux of a beautifully-flavored Nasi Ambeng. You should not use a blender to grind the spices in order to retain the authentic flavors," said the famous cook who is also known as chef Wan. He added, "It is an authentic Javanese dish and is normally served and shared on a dulang. "Nasi Ambeng is to be shared among four, six or even eight people sitting on the floor. Men normally sit separately from the women and they all eat with their hands in true communal style," said chef Wan. According to chef Wan, the rice was often packed in a container called takir, which is made of banana leaves, in the good old days. "These days, it's difficult to get takir so they opt for plastic containers. The secret of Nasi Ambeng not only lies in its spices, preparation or the name but in its history. "History has it that Nasi Ambeng is a kind of evidence for jealous wives. Wives are pleased

when their husbands take home leftover Nasi Ambeng as prove that they were at a kenduri and not anywhere else," said chef Wan.

It is said that the bond between the people who prepare this rice dish is enhanced and further strengthened as they eat the dish together. For chef Wan, the experience of eating Nasi Ambeng is immensely intimate. "There is a certain joy which cannot be explained when you share this gastronomical delight with many people. As you eat with your hands, you talk and exchange pleasantries. This enforces the bond between us," he said. The composition of nasi ambang vary from restaurant to restaurant, stall to stall. I enjoy trying nasi ambang from eatery to eatery as I am thrilled by the surprising twists that I might find inside the dish.

*****THANK YOU*****