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CARIBBEAN FLAVOURS *with*

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MOMOFUKU SEIOBO

Creole fish

"The term Creole refers to a mix, in this case the combination of African and French that created this distinctive style of cooking," says Carmichael. "Creole cooking is typically characterised by the use of indigenous ingredients that are cooked with a base of tomatoes, capsicum and onions. In our household back home, Creole sauce was a quick sauce that could be whipped up to pour over rice, or anything for that matter. The following recipe is refined in comparison to what I would make as a kid. At a pinch, if you only have tomato, capsicum and onion, add a bit of garlic, ketchup and water and you can make something tasty. My mum would steam this fish and smother it in Creole sauce, but I switch it up a bit and cook it en-papillote using a banana leaf as the wrapper."

Prep time 30 mins, cook 1¼ hrs,
(plus resting)

Serves 10

- 4-6 banana leaves for wrapping
- 2 red snapper (800gm each;
or substitute another snapper
if red isn't available), scaled,
gutted, fins trimmed
- 2 limes, halved, plus extra to
serve

Green seasoning

- ½ onion, coarsely chopped
- 1 small or ½ large spring onion,
chopped
- 1 garlic clove
- ½ cup (loosely packed) flat-leaf
parsley
- 1½ tsp (loosely packed) thyme
- 1½ tsp marjoram
- ¼ habanero chilli
- ¼ tsp Worcestershire sauce

Creole sauce

- 350 gm (2 medium) onions, thinly
sliced
- 50 ml olive oil
- 5 garlic cloves, grated
- 200 gm red capsicum (1 medium),
cut into julienne
- 2 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 2 small ripe tomatoes, coarsely
chopped
- 2 small spring onions, thinly sliced
- ½ habanero chilli, finely chopped
- 2 small fresh bay leaves
- 1 tsp marjoram
- 1 tsp fresh thyme leaves
- 250 ml (1 cup) fish stock
- 25 gm tomato sauce
- 1½ tbs Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tsp soy sauce
- 20 gm butter, diced

1 For green seasoning, process ingredients in a food processor to a slightly coarse paste. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper. Makes ½ cup. You'll need 50gm for this recipe-reserve remainder for other uses.

2 For Creole sauce, sauté onion in olive oil in a saucepan over low-medium heat until softened (7-8 minutes). Add garlic and cook for a further 3-4 minutes, then add capsicum and celery, and sauté until softened (4-5 minutes). Add remaining ingredients except butter and cook over low-medium heat until liquid has reduced and vegetables are tender (25-30 minutes). Adjust seasoning and stir in butter. Cool.

3 Preheat oven to 200°C. Trim thicker edges on banana leaves and wilt each leaf over a gas flame (10-15 seconds per leaf, or blanch them). Place snapper on plates and squeeze a lime over each, stand for 5 minutes, then lightly pat dry. Season both fish with salt and rub green seasoning inside and out. Place each fish on a large piece of wilted banana leaf, slather with Creole sauce, then top with a second, smaller piece of banana leaf and tuck the sides under. Then bring sides up from bottom leaf to enclose fish completely and secure with toothpicks, ensuring there are no gaps that will leak. Place fish parcels on a wire rack with a tray underneath to catch any drips, and bake until fish is cooked and a skewer inserted meets little resistance (25 minutes). Serve fish with extra lime.

MY NOTES